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PETER TSCHERKASSKY / LUKE DUBOIS
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JASON NELSON / PAPER RESISTANCE



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Founder & Editor-in-chief:

Marco Mancuso

Advisory Board:

Marco Mancuso, Lucrezia Cippitelli, Claudia D'Alonzo

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Eva Scaini

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Peter Tscherkassky.audiovisuals From A Darkroom

Marco Mancuso



Peter Tscherkassky - Coming attractions (2010)
25min 12sec - 35mm - Soundtrack: Dirk Schaefer - Sixpack film (Wien)

Let's start from an assumption: I am not a film critic and more in general I do not work exclusively on experimental cinema. This analysis of the avant guard director Peter Tscherkassky, born in Wien in 1958 and winner at the 67th Venice Film Festival in the "Nuovi Orizzonti" section with the film *Coming Attractions*, will probably lack those lexical elements and elements of analysis used by the most orthodox film criticism, and will inesorably be exposed to a radical reading of the following text.

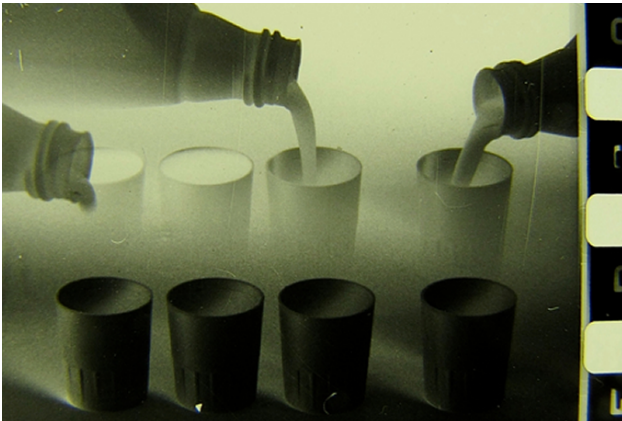
In spite of that, my intention is to highlight the austrian director's work, in terms of the importance that I think it has not only as far as cinema is concerned, but also and especially towards the production and the

audiovisual research taken as an aesthetic-expressive possibility of the sound-image relationship.

Among the most anticipated hosts of the IX MAGIS Film Studies Spring School in Gorizia, which had place place at the beginning of April in the "garden city", where the Isonzo river flows, Peter Tscherkassky presented a screening of some of its important films and had a lecture about his latest work *Coming Attractions*, created during a two years period of collaboration with his wife, the american filmmaker Eve Heller. And on this artwork is based, of course, the interview which enhances and complements this article.

Peter Tscherkassky cannot just be seen as a director. He is so much more than that: he is a director, yes, but also an obsessive experimenter of languages, techniques, tools and expressive possibilities linked to the use and abuse of the filmic material. At the same time, he is a critical texts author, a planner of events related to experimental cinema and to foundfootage, and director of the Diagonale Festival

(<http://www.diagonale.at/>) in Graz and also an esteemed founder and director of the Sixpackfilm (<http://www.sixpackfilm.com/>), which since 1991 produces and promotes experimental cinema works and austrian video art.



Peter Tscherkassky - Coming attractions (2010)
25min 12sec - 35mm - Soundtrack: Dirk Schaefer - Sixpack film (Wien)

Coming Attractions is a reflection on the possible contact points between old-school cinema and avant guard cinema, in their common ability to create a sort of attraction, hence the title of the work, between the director and the audience. Shifting the idea and the attention to the contemporary scenario, Peter Tscherkassky highlights in *Coming Attractions* the intrinsic possibilities hidden in the commercials, in the advertising messages, as a very peculiar way of starting a sort of emotional attraction between product (actor) and spectator (audience).

The audiovisual material for *Coming Attractions* is obtained by working out footage material coming from

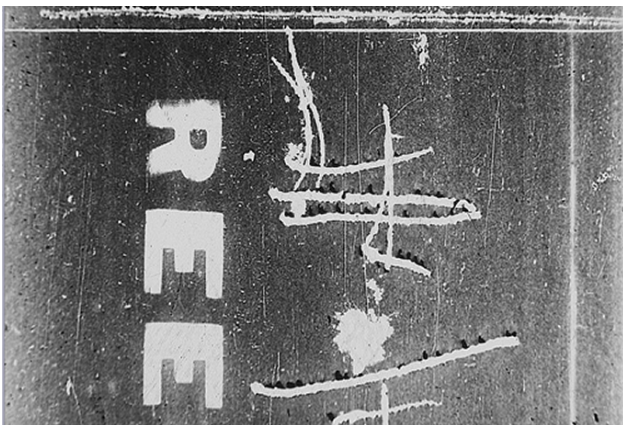
different advertising campaigns. The austrian director uses the found footage practice since a long, enriched by the *CinemaScope* format, as in the trilogy made up of some of his last works, just like *Outer Space* (1999), winner of many international awards, *Dream Work* (2001) and *Instructions for a Light and Sound Machine* (2005).

The footage searched, found and extrapolated both by the cinema history and contemporary films, becomes for Tscherkassky a starting point of an obsessive work on frame details, an iconographic deconstruction, a play on superimpositions, a direct attack to the senses of the spectator, absorbed by the rythm of the flicker. The eye searches for a remaining of shapes in the projection which becomes just light and darkness; it looks for traces of the primary image which the film takes with itself, even in the most radical manipulation.

Through an anarchic and proudly analogue working modality, Tscherkassky is able to work with 16mm and 35mm film frames, "treating them" as individual shots on which to work on in the darkroom and which taking the most immersive potentiality out of, in the editing and montage stage. Works such as *Shot-Countershot* (1987), *Manufraktur* (1985) and also *Outer Space* (1999) and

Instructions for a Light and Sound Machine (2005) represent a clear example of how modern digital audiovisual composition techniques cannot be compared to the expressive potential, the synaesthetic ability and the multilayered complexity of the shots, reverse shots, lighting and montage techniques which only the work on Super8 films can ensure.

And, I don't want to leave aside the beautiful work on sound, typical of each one of Tscherkassky's films, often composed by the musician Dirk Schaefer, but also by the director itself, creating "optical" sound tracks directly in the darkroom, as in the case of *L'Arrivée* (1997-1998), *Outer Space* (1999) or *Nachtstück* (Nocturne), whose score supports and enhances (or maybe it is the contrary) the rhythmic editing of images and the constant use of the flicker.



Peter Tscherkassky - Instructions for a light and sound machine (2005)
35mm Cinescope, s/w - Soundtrack Dirk Schaefer - Slipcase Film (Wien)

I spoke with Peter Tscherkassky about this and much more, in the following interview:

Marco Mancuso: I would like to start from your last work *Coming Attractions*, winner at 67th Venice Film Festival in the "Nuovi Orizzonti" section. Can you tell me something about the idea of the project and its relationships with your previous films? Especially regarding the references to early days cinema, to the "attractive" dimension of cinema that is clear in this film even from the title, but that is clear and present in all your production...

Peter Tscherkassky: Well, about the relationship between *Coming Attractions* and my earlier films: If you view the entire CinemaScope trilogy and *Instructions for a Light and Sound Machine* there's a lot of violence, it's like a massive impact. For my subsequent project I deeply longed to do something different: a kind of comedy, a lighter hearted movie. When I viewed these wonderful commercials that had fallen into my hands, I knew they could provide the basis for such a new film. As to the connection between early cinema and the avant-garde in *Coming Attractions*, please see my homepage. There you can read a short text answering exactly that question

Marco Mancuso: Always speaking about *Coming Attractions*. It has been produced with Eve Heller. Together, you introduced the movie at the beginning of April, within the program

of IX Magis Spring School / Film Forum organized by DAMS-Udine University. Can you tell me more about your collaboration?

Peter Tscherkassky: Up until now I produced my dark room films from the first to the last frame with a precise score as to the sequences and overall shape of the film. After generating this material in the darkroom, very little subsequent editing was required literally just a few hours. With *Coming Attractions* I took a different approach. I generated a great deal of material in the darkroom on the basis of extremely repetitive commercial takes and it was only after this phase that I got down to editing and shaping the material with the assistance of fellow filmmaker Eve Heller, who also happens to work with found footage.

She was able to view my material with the unbiased eye of someone who had not been immersed in it for over two years, and this perspective was extremely helpful. Also, as an avant-garde filmmaker herself, she has a fine sense of visual rhythms and sense of the significance of each individual frame. We were able to work on the fine cut of the film with a fast and deep mutual understanding. She also contributed to a few ideas that we ended up using for the soundtrack that was created by Dirk Schaefer.



Peter Tscherkassky - L'amve (1997-98)
2min 09sec - 35mm/Cinemascope, 35mm & 16mm - Sixpack Film (Wien), Light Cone (Paris)

Marco Mancuso: If you reflect upon *Coming Attractions* and you look back to your previous artworks for a moment. Can you maybe observe a sort of path, a development from your early works to the latest ones, in terms of use of found-footage as a tool? I mean, did you feel that the development of languages, contaminations, new technologies, formats, influenced you in some way in the use of this instrument?

Peter Tscherkassky: Basically, with each of my darkroom films I've developed further skills when it comes to manipulating the found footage, contact printing using different light sources, selecting imagery and initiating new ways of combining different source materials. Take a look at my first "pure" found footage film made in the dark room entitled *Manufacture*, which can be found on my DVD *Films from a Dark Room* (on the Index label). I think it's a film I don't have to be ashamed of, but it lacks the semantics. After I

made that film I started to have a growing interest in “stories”, in tales to be told, and accordingly proceeded to develop narrative strategies.

As to the last part of your question, I would say that I am influenced by new technologies, and formats, however *ex negativo*: These forms are not just new and “innocent”, but were designed to replace analog film and analog film as a medium of fine art cannot be replaced by digital technologies since the materiality of the two media are completely different and have nothing to do with one another. I decided to make work that illustrates and celebrates the qualities of analog film which cannot be replaced by non-analog media.

Marco Mancuso: The avant-guard film making has been always considered iconoclastic. As you always pointed out, “the avant-guard authors work on an investigation of the actual image, whose reality must be created within that image itself”. Avant-garde filmmakers underlined the artificial qualities of the medium in their work and deprived the cinematographic image of its own identity, always working with technologies that have become electronic in the last decades.

So, what do you think about the contemporary (even digital or not, I don’t care) audiovisual production? Don’t you find a sort of parallelism,

just after the big phenomena of found-footage that inspired a lot of contemporary production & performing practices, with avant-guard movements in terms of iconoclastic detachment from the actual image, considered more as a territory of aesthetical and technical analysis?

Peter Tscherkassky: To be honest, I am not familiar enough with more recent developments within the electronic and digital avant-garde to answer these questions. But from what I’ve seen and from what I know both as to the works and intentions behind them you are absolutely right. There seems to be a strong tendency towards abstraction, and if we choose to call that “iconoclastic”, we have a new sort of iconoclasm at work.



Peter Tscherkassky - Instructions for a light and sound machine (2005)
17mm Dsec - 35mmCinemascope Soundtrack .Dak Schaefer - Siegen Film (Wen).

Marco Mancuso: You started working with Super 8 technics, that your recognized as “a microscope which

allowed us to see beneath the skin of reality and make the internal lives of images visible in a way that was not possible with any other format". All your efforts in terms of working with graininess, resolution, manufacturing, expressionism of shadows and lights, were always pushed towards a feeling of destruction, ruininess, pathos, expression; this happened to you, in those years in which "immaterial" media - video and computer-generated images - were considered the new central issue.

If you could imagine a new technology tomorrow, not even digital or virtual, in which direction would you like it could empower the voyeuristic and reality observation potentialities of super 8, 16mm and 35mm technologies?

Peter Tscherkassky: My work is deeply engaged with exploring the materiality of the medium. In this sense I cannot answer to how I would work with an imaginary medium of the future that has no specific qualities I can foresee. I need the friction of material limitations to generate my ideas.

Marco Mancuso: In many of your film works, you make use of what you called "the physics of seeing". I'm very much interested in this psychological aspect of your movies, in the idea that a physical stimulus can lead the

viewer to ask himself some questions about what he/she has seen. The sequence of the images in your movies, the almost solid use of the flicker, the assaulting use of shadows and lights, are tools that you use to go deep inside this research. I wonder why you never tried to explore the world of physical immersive audiovisual installation, to enrich the physical/psychological duality of your works. Is there any particular reason?

Peter Tscherkassky: No, not really. Let's put it this way: Until now I have been interested in projected film. In the case of my dark room films I have used 35mm film, most often CinemaScope. In my opinion, as far as the art of moving images is concerned, this is the most powerful tool I can access and use to produce work on a really low-tech-level. And when I say "low-tech", I mean it. You can't imagine how low my technical level is when I make my films! As a consequence I don't need a producer, I don't need a big budget, I don't need technicians, I don't need to bother to find a space where I can set up an installation, I don't have to take care of the presentation of the work, AND SO ON.

All I have to do is to find enough time and mental space to make my film. When I'm finished, I place it in the care of my distributors and my part is done. I see and experience my

position in this regard as wonderfully privileged. This is not to rule out the possibility that the day may come when I have an idea, a concept, or a truly thrilling invitation to set up an installation and I take it on. And no doubt the specific physiological aspect of the context will be pivotal to that installation.



Peter Tscherkassky - Kelimba (1986)
10min 56 sec - Super8 - 16mm Blow up. Sixpackfilm (Vienna)

Marco Mancuso: Also sound, has a very important role in your films. A landscape which is always present on a primary level, always connected with rhythm and impact of images. How did your interests in contemporary and electronic music and musicians influence you in terms of the sound scripts of your films? Did you try to develop some ideas or inputs you received from your listenings and studies of the past?

Peter Tscherkassky: I've always listened to contemporary music, ever since I got to know it at school at the age of 18. And I've always had a

particular interest in *Musique concrète* in both of its forms: the early, "truly" *concrète* compositions, like those by Pierre Schaeffer and the early Pierre Henry, but also in its later form as electronical music, mainly developed by the *Groupe de Recherches Musicales (GRM)* at IRCAM in Paris. To me it seems quite natural to try to combine my love for that specific music with my own films. But I've also used popular music like the Annie Cordy hit (in *Happy-End*), or Greek folk music (in *Kelimba*).

And of course I created "optical" sound tracks in the dark room, as in the case of *L'Arrivée*, *Outer Space* and *Nachtstück (Nocturne)*. It has always been a truly challenging and rewarding experience to work with sound, and I am totally bent on more further experimentation in this regard. Besides, I've loved to cooperate with musicians and composers like Armin Schmickl, Kiawash Saheb-Nassagh and above all, with Dirk Schaefer who composed the soundtrack for *Instructions* and *Coming Attractions*.

Marco Mancuso: The use of found-footage is functional for you to show your idea of using film techniques to explore the notion of "film as a mirror" of reality. It always seemed to me a very political and antagonist way to be an artist: this tense to transmit a sort of audiovisual energy to the viewer, it's a very strong political act

to me. From your first experiences and reference to Kubelka and the other Vienna Actionists to later use of violent rhythms of delay, fragmentation, looping and degraded image and sound, abstract cut and paste density, how your attitude to be a political film maker has been changing in the last years?

Peter Tscherkassky: I would say that every advanced art and art form has a tendency towards “enlightenment”, since to be understood and appreciated it needs an “enlightened” or at least open minded audience, with a willingness to reflect upon one’s own systems of understanding, of how we perceive and decode the world. I doubt that this makes me a “political” artist in the sense we normally use to consider that notion. But hopefully I’m a political artist in the way Theodor Adorno would describe it.



Peter Tscherkassky - *Coming Attractions* (2010)
25min 12sec - 35mm - Soundtrack: Dirk Schaefer - Sixpack Film (Wien)

Marco Mancuso: The CinemaScope

trilogy and also *Instructions for a Light and Sound Machine* were presented at Cannes Film Festival in 2002 and 2005. Moreover, in 2010 *Coming Attractions* won at the 67th Venice Film Festival. So, which is your approach to cinema industry or mainstream festivals?

Peter Tscherkassky: Well, speaking of “political filmmaker”, I would say that it is not my approach to mainstream festivals that has changed much over the years but perhaps the attitude of the industry itself has: I still don’t want to be part of the cinema industry or commercial cinema, but I do want my films to be shown and it seems as if mainstream festivals are increasingly into my project they invite my films, screen them and sometimes their juries give them awards.

And as long as I don’t get the feeling that this is corrupting my work, it’s fine with me. Of course these invitations have a strong side effect: they draw the attention of a wider audience towards the work of the avant-garde, so it really helps to spread the idea of a form of cinema that is not commercial, a form of counter-cinema.

Marco Mancuso: HYou had always worked as curator and developer of symposia, film programmes and festivals concerning film studies, film avant-garde authors, found footage.

You were also director at Diagonale festival of Austrian films. Let us know more about your double figure of artist and curator, how do you manage it? And, how this double activity is integrated with Sixpack Film management and selection of works?

Peter Tscherkassky: I work as a curator and organizer to earn money. I wouldn't make enough for a living just by making films. But I was always interested in developing and spreading the infrastructure for our films as well. And that was the main reason we founded Sixpack Film in 1991. Originally we only wanted to organize a found footage festival in Wien, one of the first of its kind worldwide, but then we decided to continue our work as a sales organization and distributor and up to now we have been truly successful. We wish that every country had an organisation like Sixpack Film.

It encourages young filmmakers to start and continue their work: It really makes a difference if you know that there is a good chance that your film or video will be shown at many festivals and other venues, or not. Anyway, I am still chairman of Sixpack Film, but I am not involved in the daily business. The selection of films which are represented by us was always, and right from the beginning, been in the

hands of an independent jury. Every two or three years the jury members change, and by changing people there is a continuous flow of perspectives and opinions. It's a system that has proven very effective.



Peter Tscherkassky - Outer Space (1999) - 9min 58sec - 35mm/Cinemascope
35mm & 16mm - Sixpack Film (wien), Light Cone (Paris), Canyon Cinema (San Francisco)

Marco Mancuso: Finally, what are you working on at the moment? Any idea for the next film?

Peter Tscherkassky: At the moment I am working as editor of an English book about the history of Austrian Avant-Garde cinema, called Film Unframed. Eve Heller, who has been raised bi-lingual, is translating the German texts, and the book itself will be published by the Austrian Film Museum and Synema, as part of their ongoing and very successful publication series. The book should be out in November. That is when I will start to work on my next film and yes, I do have an idea, absolutely: so watch out!

Paper Resistance: Graphic (r)existence

Claudio Musso



Paper Resistance - Man(Extract)

“Paper Resistance space closed enclosed tight tinged. Here no one cheats with words the words are clear. Clear uniform worn tinged back to square one. inside this room this image and likeness place two points parenthesis opened paper and resistance invent already invented things giving them sense and new contextual meaning and contemporary purpose. Parenthesis closed.”

By reading in one go – as imposed by the absence of punctuation – this long periphrasis, one witness a superimposition of images, concepts and ideas that flash in mind like they do into Paper Resistance drawings. Its work of counterpoint and oxymoronic juxtaposition of figures and symbols of modern society, delineates in a biting manner all the contradictions

and deformations of the present. Through a plain stroke, its composition defines clearly in frames and posters filled with alienating and unpredictable associations.

Fresh from the presence to the fifth edition of BilBolBul Festival, whose it depicted the logo and presented a project on the border between drawing and participation, Paper Resistance is a widely known name in the illustration world, and a reference point indeed in underground graphic and self-production area. Its last album, *Vertigo*, has been produced for that same Zooo Press that it contributed to found and where many famous names in the Italian urban and drawing panorama work: Blu, Ericaicane, Dem, Ratigher and more.



Paper Resistance - Io Sono Qui

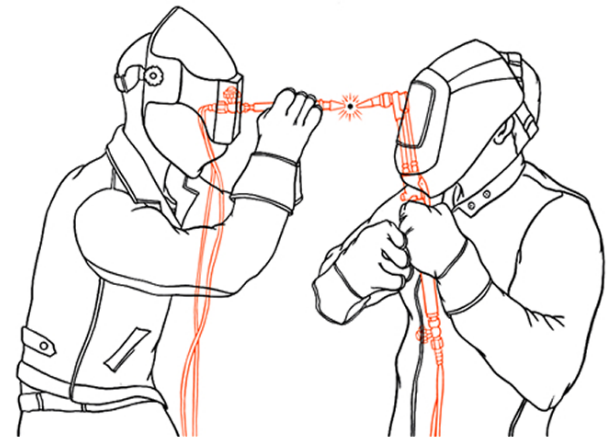
Among the more recent projects

emerges *Io sono qui! (I am here!)*. The presence of the first person strengthened by the exclamation mark contains a meeting between the artist and the young tenant of a detention home. On one side it is a workshop to get the boys closer to comics, horizontal and self-produced means of expression capable of conveying different messages, while on the other it is an installation creating transparency between the interior of the detention structure and the outside world.

After all, in the past the artist had already been interested in what we could call “aesthetics of surveillance” through publications and expositive and editorial works. From *Handcuffs*, exhaustive and diachronic catalogue of handcuffs, to *Security First*, personal work with an ironic title, following up to some series and single drawings depicting service dresses, repressive means (nightsticks, shields), protection and defence tools (anti-gas masks, helmets).

The activity by Paper Resistance fits perfectly into street culture as well. In fact it is not difficult to find it in festivals and books about it, showing the fact that paper, so far as important, it is not the only battlefield where the war is fought. And even for the most trained eye there is at least an aspect of its production that can be found in the streets or within CDs

shops: the realization of unmistakable covers and manifests which accompany the discography and concerts of bands like Pan Sonic, Comaneci, Father Murphy and Sonic Belligeranza.



Paper Resistance - Cage(Extract)

Claudio Musso: I love language and most of all the playful forms it offers. The name you chose is open to a series of ambiguities that give rise to some reflections. “Paper Resistance” as a fragile, weak and vulnerable resistance. “Paper resistance” where the paper is the only (and last) means in which to seek shelter. “Paper resistance” as weapon of protection for the masses, manifest of painted guerrilla warfare.

Paper Resistance: Well, actually the playful forms coming out of the name I chose were not been thought in advance; the name was born in a pretty intuitive and quick manner. I began working with illustrations mostly for communicative needs, for the first things I made was stickers

that I produced to stick up all around. But this happened nearly a decade ago. The contents were much politicized then. “Paper Resistance” was a little like doing $1+1=2$.

Claudio Musso: The projects and drawings you realize are connected by an extreme coherence. Though they have distant topics, it is possible to follow back your research up to a sort of “poetics of control”. Your works’ titles and the topics you analyze turn around the idea of freedom, or, better to say, deprivation of freedom. How was born this obsession?

Paper Resistance: In my work I prefer dealing with matters, topics and sensations I really see, feel or perceive, rather than watching my belly button and describing it through some drawings. Then there is obviously a phrase of global elaboration summarizing the interpretation and representation of what comes around. I “feel” the control because it exists and I represent it because it is likely necessary to do that. One of my favourite approaches is what Milton Glaser defined as “drawing is thinking”.

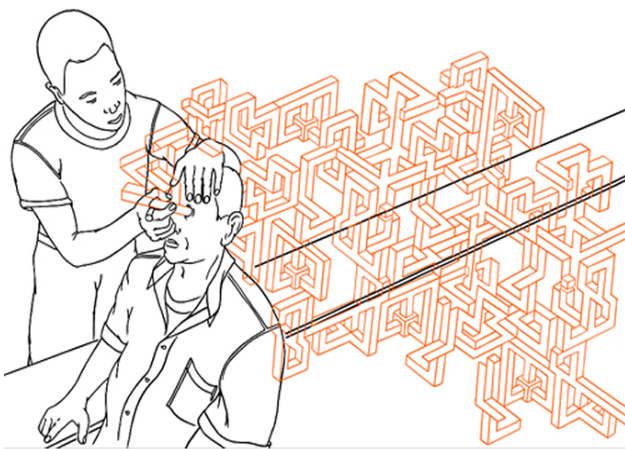


Claudio Musso: In your last editing work, *Vertigo*, the use of duotone patterns the vision on two different and complementary plans at the same time. The image in close-up and the one on the background (interchangeable as if in a cognitive psychology game) melt to form a unique paradoxical figure that is nourished, depending on the cases, by opposite polarities such as natural/man-made, human/inhuman, open/closed...

Paper Resistance: Precisely. *Vertigo* has been conceived and realized as a work exclusively based on the stroke. No kind of patterning, just lines and strokes. Under a certain point of view it is a new approach compared with the ones I previously used, and yet when I began working on it I felt like there would have been much room for improvement. The utilization of duotone then comes in handy because it is capable of structuring new and different interpretations on a graphic level as well.

Claudio Musso: The often soft and illustrative stroke of the drawings introduces the raw violence of the scenes. The well spread colours, the moderate tones and the neutral background have an oxymoronic relation with the tragic nature of the scenes described. Some famous examples, in wide chronological time, soon come in mind: from the medieval *Tacuina* up to the constructivist graphics. Who are your masters? What are the sources of your inspiration?

Paper Resistance: The sources of my inspiration are not necessarily of graphic nature. I am easily swayed by everything I see every day, but then all of that is elaborated by following an interlocking game and some combinations based on paradoxes. In a certain way I see this kind of approach in the works of artists such as Gee Vaucher, Winston Smith, Jamie Reid and Raymond Pettibon, and maybe John Heartfield most of all.



Claudio Musso: Your never accidental combinations come from various fields and media. In the case of Handcuffs your search has been historic, as if you were an archivist. The images of the handcuffs, unmistakable icon of the loss of freedom and allegorical figure of a forced link, belong to different and more or less remote times and they outline some characteristics...

Paper Resistance: I think the most important characteristic lies in the last typology of handcuffs illustrated in the work, the one called “since 1999 – world wide street”. The *plastiCuffs*, if you ask me. I guess they appeared in Israel first, but since 1999, in the battle of Seattle, they began spreading in the streets of every “western” demonstration. It is interesting the fact they are light and plastic-made, so that every police-man can carry as many as he wants. As if to say there is plenty of them for anyone.

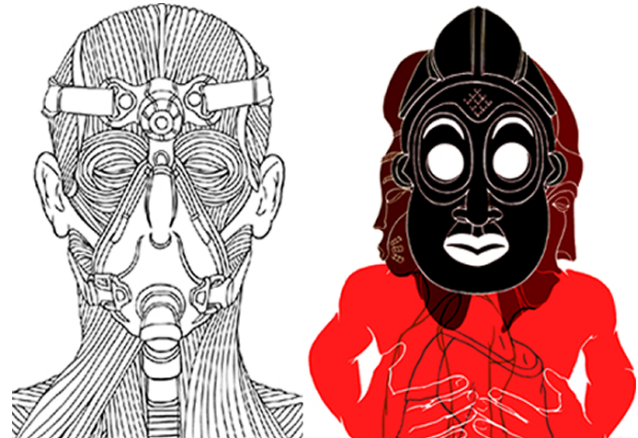
Claudio Musso: Speaking about recent events, your presence to the last Bologna BilBolBul Festival witnessed the realization of the coordinated image and a project. Io sono qui! starts from a direct relation with the tenant of the Pratello detention home and it has been translated into an installation reflecting and connecting the inside with the outside. How is it happened?

Paper Resistance: The Hamelin association, the body organizing BilBolBul, asked me to draw the principal illustration of the festival, and as an author I was also invited to present an exposition. I meant to create something different from a “standard” exposition. I had the idea of working with the detention home since years, and I thought the festival would have been the perfect chance. So, along with Hamelin we conceived and realized *Io sono qui* (<http://www.io-sono-qui.org>).

We did not mean to realize a work about the detention home, we meant to work with the detention home, or better to say, with the people living inside it day and night. We meant to create an opening and let others see who is inside, why he is inside and take him out for all the world to see.

The project was basically divided in two different phases. The first was about collaborating with the young tenants through photographic labs, working on portraits and self-representations, while the second was saw me drawing and illustrating the portraits of the boys. The whole work, realized on large size printings, has then been stuck up on the external walls of the detention home. It has been a collective work that required a couple of months and was organized into different moments. To this purpose we created a website, so that

it could contain every information and confer a unique form on our work.



Paper Resistance - Breath (Left), Bbblogo (Right)

Claudio Musso: Besides being artist, illustrator and activist, you are among the founders of *Inguine Mah!gazine* review, among the organizers of *Original Cultures* and you work for *Zooo Press* as well. Is this the demonstration that today the diffusion of artistic practices have to pass through self-production and self-management? How much do the mixture of various figures and the interchangeability of roles (from the educational plan inside the Academy to the experimental plan in the streets) steer you into research?

Paper Resistance: In my opinion the self-production approach or any independent approach does not concern this very historic period or these artistic practices only. As far as I'm concerned, my attitude towards our everyday life is this. I do not like very much to delegate others, I prefer to create personally. To create a book,

an event, or anything else, but to create it my way, maybe even losing money in the process, yet realizing it, following it, attending to his birth, seeing it grow and perhaps even seeing its death.

Many artists think the same, but when it comes to production this is the path I choose. Yet it does not mean it is the only one to be taken. As for interchangeability... I am what I am. I

remain the same, but I play more roles at the same time. I only try to infuse into these role as much as experience as I can. And sometimes it can prove useful...

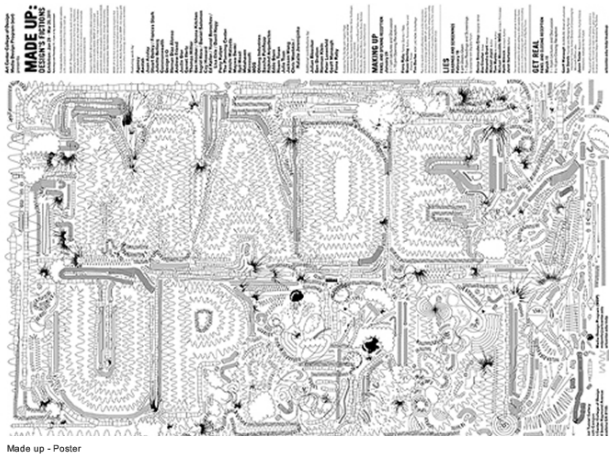
<http://www.paper-resistance.org>

<http://www.zooo.org>

<http://www.io-sono-qui.org>

Tracing Experiences. Design's Fiction: The “made Up” Exhibition

Mattia Casalegno



This winter the Media Design Program at Pasadena's Art Center College of Design hosted “Made Up”, an exhibition and series of events devoted to the most innovative productions at the borders of science fiction, speculative design, and fictional storytelling, united for the occasion under the umbrella term “design's fiction.”

Staged in the MDP's Wind Tunnel Gallery (an impressive, secret former Jet Propulsion Lab facility where ultrasonic jets were tested), Made Up, as its curators Tim Durfee and Haelim Paek claim, is a new type of exhibition a self-recording, 1:1 map of questions and propositions: dreams as program; science fiction as precedent; cults of commerce; objects as ideas; strange-ified banality; truth-revealing jokes;

false histories; and elaborated scenarios. The artists present in the exhibition use speculative practices and fictional storytelling to produce as much as to provoke.

They enjoy framing scientific research with narrative models, creating critical or philosophical objects, and designing for future scenarios or technological capabilities, acknowledging the increasingly uncanny correspondence of the real and the imaginary.

Design's fiction, nowadays is quite a fashionable term in the world of media art and design, thanks to the seminal work done in the past years by the Design Interactions department at the Royal College of Art (RCA), and most notably by its faculty, Antony Dunne and Fiona Raby. The latter was also present as a key speaker for the opening panel of the exhibition, sharing the stage with another of the world's influential voice at the intersection of fiction and design: Bruce Sterling.



Thomas Hillier, "The Contoured Landscape Undemeath The Knitted Canopy"
detail from "The Emperor Castel Chapter 3" Thomas Hillier, 2010

Although the panel discussion didn't reveal much that was new in the genre, and the show itself felt too quickly installed, the selection of artists disclosed a good number of interesting findings worthwhile to mention. The artists present were mostly related in some way or another to the two institutions of the Art Center's MDP and the RCA, and roughly half of them have backgrounds in architecture/urbanism, and half design/art related. Let's go through the ones I enjoyed the most.

The batch of architects and urbanists present at the show were almost all Southern California based: Juan Azulay (<http://www.ma77er.com>), The Planning Center (<http://www.planningcenter.com>), Hernan Diaz Alonso (<http://www.xefirotarch.com/>) and AGENCY (<http://agencyarchitecture.blogspot.com/>).

Among these, the latter's project got my attention for his visionary approach: AGENCY's *Super Levee Urban Farm* is a project presenting a future scenario where, to safeguard against future disaster from rising sea levels, the world's cities must think of new forms of infrastructural development. In this context, they propose a global system of levees, serving as a new brand of urban farms at the city's edge, preserving local ecologies while protecting cities from emerging dangers and trying to expand in the same time the necessary infrastructural and environmental interventions to propose a more productive urban and personal life.

Still grounded in the methodological framework of architecture and urbanism, but more poetic in its expression, is the work of the British "visionarchitect" Thomas Hillier (<http://www.thomashillier.co.uk/>) whose interests include art, design, storytelling and installations with a particular interest in how literature can be directly translated into urban and architectural space. Hillier attempts to look at architecture and space using unorthodox narratives and personal visions to create original and often surreal observations, using innovative and poetic materials coupled with a technological and environmental understanding to craft a very personal idea of spatial design

through drawings, models and assemblages.

For the exhibition he presents the last iteration of *The Emperor Castle*, a three-chapter project inspired by a mythical Japanese tale that charts the story of two star-crossed lovers, the weaving *Princess and the Cowherd* who have been separated by the Princess's father, the Emperor.



Noam Toran - I cling to virtue - detail

Hillier transforms these characters into architectonic metaphors creating an Urban Theatre within the grounds of the Imperial Palace in central Tokyo: the Princess is represented as a flexible knitted membrane that envelopes the spaces below in aim to reach the grass parkland perimeter representing the Cowherd. Linked within this skin is a series of enormous origami-like lung structures, deployed around the site acting as physical barriers that manipulate the knitted skin as it extends toward the outer parkland. These manipulations are controlled and articulated by the

Emperor's army using a series of complex pulley systems that pull back the lungs and the surrounding skin.

From Hillier's website: "This piece of narrative architecture was the vehicle to examine current days' cultural and social issues in Japan such as unconditional piety, relentless work ethic, and conservative attitudes toward love () Tokyo is looked upon as the city of 'bright lights' and fast moving technology, yet within its underbelly still exists the idea of 'exquisite craft' that has defined Japan over the centuries, I wanted the Emperor's Castle to complement these ideals."

Similar to Hillier's endeavor of using mythical or historical narrative elements as a platform to build up fictional worlds, is the work of Noam Toran (<http://www.noamtoran.com>), currently teacher at the RCA. Toran's work spans multiple disciplines and mediums, involving the creation of objects and films that reflect upon the intersection between cinema, mass culture, and psychology.

His works, whether presented in films or installations, are imagined as constructions for particular individuals and psyches as commentaries on the desires, fantasies, and pathologies of modern life. His *I Cling to Virtue*, installed for the first time in September 2010 at London's V&A

Museum, is a project consisting of a fictional archive of the *Lövy Singh* clan, a twentieth-century East London family of Punjabi and Lithuanian descent. This collection of objects and video works, lying at the border of artifact and artifice, history and myth, complicates the effort of ever fully, or even adequately, archiving one's past, as those are not intended to capture a singular truth of the family, nor do they seek to produce a complete picture of the century through which the family lived, but, more simply, they attempt to curate a series of emblematic impressions.



Andrew Friend - Device for experiencing Lightning strike (2010)

Andrew Friend (<http://www.andrewfriend.co.uk>), another British artist and former RCA student present in the exhibition, shares a similar interest in the fascination for designing experiences between people, technologies, and their surroundings, but with a more personal and ironic twist. With an attitude that reminded me of Bas Jan Ader (<http://www.basjanader.com/>),

he uses a heroic iconography and an almost surreal approach.

His project *Fantastic* (2010) is a series of works dealing with that which may seem extraordinary, undesirable, confusing, or uncanny. In his words: "I am interested in the fantastic experience, be it the conscious quest to achieve one's personal (or indeed popular) fantasy, or the more subconscious seeding of a fantastic situation or construct through the actions of others. The fantastic has the power to engage the imagination, initiate dreams and trigger desires, excite, manipulate and confuse."

The project is constituted by a series of "fictional devices," such as the *Device for Experiencing Lightning Strike*, a kind of huge lightning conductor to increase the chance of getting struck by lightning; the *Device for Experiencing the Invisible*, a wearable parabolic dish aimed at increasing the effects of radio, paranormal, or electrical activity; and the *Device for Disappearing (at the Sea)* that offers the individual opportunity for a safe, temporary disappearance.

A slightly less poetic and more "technological" take on the genre came from the section of US-based artists in the exhibition. Most generally concentrated on the speculations on how emergent digital

technologies may impact our near future; this batch of projects often revolved around a specific technology and presented a more "classical" design approach and aesthetic, comprising research scenarios and prototyping methodologies.

As an example, the project *ReWire: Topological Interaction* (2008) di

Justin Gier

(<http://rewireprojects.com/>,

examines how the rise of the "Internet of Things" and embedded technology might inhabit our lives and change the way we design objects, interactions, and new experiences.

Justin Gier set up a biographic research scenario inspired by the condition of dysmorphia, an inflammatory reaction of pathways in the brain associated with the form of objects and their meaning. In this scenario, everyday devices take part in a new "ecology of things" and their forms have been hijacked, replaced with the strange and organic forms of Cucurbitaceae, also known as Gourds or Calabash.

The artist's interest here lies in the possibilities of constructing functional objects out of the gourds as a way to continue imagining future experiences: "I set out designing three discrete electronic objects. One would be activated by a cell phone call, another would be an autonomous recorder, and the other would be motion sensitive.

These are all speculations about device characteristics in the near future, exhibiting potential qualities of interaction. An interesting thing happened though once they started working. Individually each demonstrates a trait, but when placed on a shelf together they start to feedback with each other. A phone call setting the one to shaking, the vibrations of which travel the shelf and set the motion one playing its sound. The recording one picks this up and then records and plays it back. A feedback loop created out of the discrete behaviors of objects."



Justin Gier - Gourd projects (2009) - Detail

Along these lines, Chris Woebken (<http://www.chriswoebken.com>) showed a piece who started in 2008, *Animal Superpowers*. Looking at natural systems and biomimetics, it explores the differences between animal and human senses in a playful way, although I found it slightly overdidactical. The project is based on the question of how design can help us understand how we should perhaps

change in the near future to be more in tune with our technology and the environment in which we now inhabit

Woebken stresses the fact that animals have extraordinary abilities allowing them to sense information and perceive the world through sensory experiences far beyond anything humans will know: the detection of low frequencies, the sensing of magnetic fields by some birds, or the pheromone-based communication of ants, are “superpowers” whose mechanisms science is trying to decipher. Woebken moves from this statement to explore how he could approach these amazing phenomena through design and make the mystery of “animal super powers” accessible to ordinary people.

As part of the festival, a Residency Award was established with the goal to host two research projects during Summer 2010 related to the MADE UP theme. A jury composed of Bruce Sterling, Fiona Raby, and the Art Center’s Media Design Program faculty members selected the projects *Suspension of Disbelief*, by Daniel Salomon and Ingrid Hora, and *SUPERCALIFORNIA!* by Sascha Pohflepp.

Daniel Salomon (<http://www.heliko.org>) and Ingrid Hora (<http://www.ingridhora.com>)

are two very interesting artists working at the intersection of fictional design and utopian productions. For the residency, they produced a series of props exploring the design of the cultural production of spiritual movements: together with a team of student research assistants they produced shrines, icons, altars, and various technological devices. These “props” were used in the filming of a peculiar set of rituals that took place by five “cult members” in the Mojave Desert.



Daniel Salomon - Bank of Wheels

Sifting through their websites I discovered that Daniel Salomon, besides having projects such as delivering, in Esperanto for a non-Esperanto-speaking audiences, lectures around Europe about combustion and the reproduction of snails, and launching in Reykjavik a non-national sausage company selling a hot-dog named Kolbasoj Sen Limoj, or “Sausages Without Borders,” founded the Sennacia Bank (Bank without Nation) on Wheels, the only

mobile bank in the world issuing the single-world currency “Mono.”

Ingird Hora born in Italy and currently based in Berlin, aims to show the idiosyncrasies and tensions that the contemporary society brings, with the design of objects, furnitures, and performances. Lately, her work has evolved around the idea of “Functional Escape,” a term she came up with to describe “the tendency to seek distraction and relief from unpleasant realities, especially through a special activity, purpose or task.” The objects carry stories of loneliness, hope and supplication as well as the need to hide and the desire to reach out.

The other production in residence is the project *SUPERCALIFORNIA!* by Sascha Pohflepp, a London-based designer and artist interested in past and future technologies, notions of art, business, and idealism.

SUPERCALIFORNIA: Forever Future, is an installation that includes a short film, a series of portraits, and a set of objects. In the installation, a fictitious character named Rob Walker remembers the 1970s, the Voyager probes, and the debate about space colonies. The project tries to answer the question “What happens to technological visions when they do not come true?” and moves from the assumption that ideas, once they have been part of the public imagination,

do not go away.

They might go into a kind of “cultural limbo” from where they may be materialized at another point in time, or there might be futures that for various reasons may never materialize, which appear to be speeding away and thus stay at a certain distance from us. Phantom futures may evoke a certain nostalgia in some, because they may have been part of the dreams and wishes of their life.



Sascha Pohflepp - Supercalifornia! Forever future (2010)
Installation view at the wind tunnel gallery (Pasadena)

A way to stress the fact that sometimes reality can be much more dystopian and fictionalized than much of science fiction, but that science fiction and the design borne from it is as much as important as reality when it comes at the point of producing collective dreams and wishes.

<http://www.artcenter.edu/mdp/mad>

[eup/exhibition.html](#)

More Perfect Union. The Emotional Cartography By Luke Dubois

Pasquale Napolitano



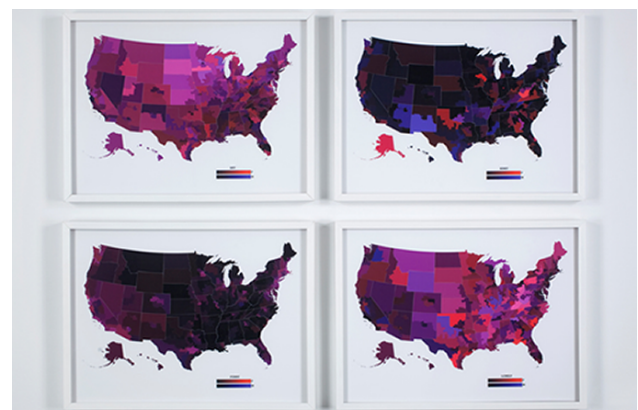
R.Luke Dubois - A More Perfect Union: New York City, 2011 - detail view pigment-ink on photo rag - 48x46" / 117 x 117 cm
Photo courtesy bitforms gallery nyc - photo by John Berens

More Perfect Union, the last work by Luke Dubois (United States, 1975), artist, scholar, musician, represented by the Bitforms Gallery in New York (directed by Steve Sacks e Laura Blereau), one of the most influential exhibition centers in the digital art scenario, places itself as an interesting attempt to investigate the sentimental life of americans, through the digital visualization potential.

The work is about a mapping of the american identity through an analysis of the 21 main online meeting websites. A sort of media coverage and aestheticization of the most important experiences of investigating interpersonal relationships like *Comizi d'amore* by Pier Paolo Pasolini or by Alfred Kisey if you want, who with his relationships

defied the conventions taking care of issues until then considered a taboo.

The work was organized following the same heuristics of the american census. " Every ten years in the United States, we conduct a census whose aim is to determine how many people live in different areas of our country, together with a simple calculation, the results of the census give us an idea of our income, job, houses, age [...] What would happen instead if we asked what people do on Saturday night? What would happen if we asked what kind of person we want to love? choosing profiles for the encounters through a congressional district and analysing statistically images and text, creating maps using words spoken by 16,7 million people who describe themselves and what they desire.



R.Luke Dubois - listed clockwise from top right:
A more Perfect Union: Kinky, 2011 ; A more perfect Union: shy, 2011
A more perfect union: funny 2011, A more perfect union: Lonely, 2011
Photo courtesy bitforms gallery nyc - photo by John Berens

The result is summarized in a sentimental atlas of the United States, in which every geographic area is described by terms expressing the users' feelings, instead of city names: 20.262 individual words, based on the analysis of online profiles. Every word is displayed in the geographic area of the country where it is used the most.

This interesting info-aesthetic survey is just the last piece of one of the most significant artistic, technical and research experiences in the contemporary scenario. We are talking about the one by Luke Dubois, artist who explores with technical skills the time, verbal, visual and rhetoric structures of the contemporary cultural industry.

A teacher at the Media Center in Brooklyn and the NYU's Polytechnic Institute, his records are available on Caipirinha / Sire, Liquid Sky, C74, and Cantaloupe Music. It is fair to mention also his collaboration to the drafting and creation of Jitter, suite software for the data manipulation and the resulting real time data visualization .

Luke Dubois works in different areas in a coherent way, measuring techniques and computational creativity suggestions in well recognisable groups: from the one linked to the visualization, which acquires a sociological impact, in the use and production of decoded data,

aimed at studying social phenomena thanks to a merging of art and data mining processes in the visual rhetoric, which could be defined as typical of democracy (W. Sack, 2007)

; to the group related to the reflection on contemporary iconographies cinema, pop universe, fashion approached through a use of technologies which is not linked to the territory, in order to use already decoded cultural products as analysis material which undergoes re-semanticization processes through calculation; the other group is about the works on time, compression and expansion of the actual performance duration, through a audio-visual experimentation linked to technological innovations.



R. Luke Dubois. Hindsight is always 20/20. 2008 - 43 page hand bound book of archival inkjet prints 41 eye charts, 1 title, synopsis - 20.25 x 16x1 / 51.5 x 40.5 x 2.5 cm edition of 25
Photo courtesy bliforne gallery nyc - photo by John Berens

We try to retrace the artistic, emotional, thought paths of this many-sided artist, talking to Luke Dubois itself, who starts from his last exhibition to then show us his eclecticism.

Pasquale Napolitano: Let's start from your last works, *Hindsight is Always 20/20* and *A More Perfect Union*. The cognitive thinking, at the base of the analytical methodology that you apply to the theme that you choose to address, is very challenging. It is like as, if translating the analysis of numbers and words on the basis of the political-economic discourse, from a quantitative (standard) to a qualitative (aesthetic) methodology, I were able to generate a difference of meaning (typical of the language of art in historical sense). So I would like to ask you: is the political intent behind your work intentional?

Luke Dubois: There is definitely a political intent behind a lot of my work. In the most recent two pieces (*Hindsight is Always 20/20* and *A More Perfect Union*) I'm trying to create a type of American portraiture based on the language and rhetoric of our culture.

I feel that, as we enter the 21st century, we are bombarded with language: facts, figures, sound-bytes, Facebook profiles, “tweets”, the “news crawl” underneath cable news broadcasts, etc. We are only beginning to develop the media literacy to cope with this information.

So I thought it would be interesting to create works that juxtapose a “high” mode of rhetoric (presidential speeches) against a “low” mode

(dating profiles)... sort of a sacred-versus-profane dialectic that gives us insight into American national identity.

At the same time, both of those pieces serve as critiques of their formal antecedents: *Hindsight* pokes fun at so-called “tag clouds”, which purport to reduce large quantities of textual information to a few keywords; *Perfect Union* critiques the ten-year U.S. census, which is a deeply flawed, politicized process that functions as the document of record for who Americans “are”.

We see a lot of data visualization in our everyday lives, in print and other media, yet we don't understand how easy it is to lie with statistics. These works also lack in the metaphors that allow us to free-associate and imagine connections, which is what I try to accomplish with my pieces.



R.Luke Dubois - A more perfect union: California, 2011 - detail view pigment-ink on photo rag - 36x24" / 91.5 x 61 cm edition of 6
Photo courtesy bitforms gallery nyc - photo by John Berens

Pasquale Napolitano: Always thinking of *More Perfect Union*, do you think

you can interpret some of your artefacts as possible help to the audio-visual social research? More precisely, don't you think that this kind of work uses the languages of art (in this case of the installation) to summarize social phenomenon data, within a graphical artefact? Finally, when you create a work like *More Perfect Union*, do you consciously try to give the work both a scientific value (in the sense of the social sciences) and an aesthetic value?

Luke Dubois: My pieces are implemented using the same statistical methodologies used in the social sciences, but I try not to encourage people to interpret the artwork as "research". The works are intended to provoke conversation, not act as "fact". In this sense, it's no different from the semiotics of class portraiture. Da Vinci's *La Gioconda* is one artist's view of Lisa Gherardini, it's not actually her.

My pieces are meant to be an interpretation of a select corpus of information written or created or valued by us, which I then invert to point out something I think is interesting about us, but obviously doesn't reflect the complexity of the whole subject. By realizing that this is a flawed and incomplete exercise, you can look at the artifacts more clearly as artwork than as data visualization; I readily concede the limitation of the

form.

Pasquale Napolitano: More than being a conceptual artist, you also have an experimental and technical background, as Jitter's co-author. How do you combine these two aspects (we could say, typical of the Renaissance artist)?

Luke Dubois: I strongly believe that an artist needs to have fluency in their tools. If your tool is a computer, you should understand how it works, to better utilize it to make work. I am an auto-didact in the sense that I never studied computer science or fine art. I studied music, which has elements of both. I believe in Anne Bogart's assertion that an artist needs to seize her/his means of production in order to succeed. We live at a point in time where that is possible like never before, thanks to YouTube, etc... We can create tools and execute our pieces without too much reliance on the traditional gatekeeping that oversaw the dissemination of cultural capital in previous ages. So I feel that designing software is a natural extension of what I do as an artist, and vice versa.



RLuke Dubois - Installation view - Hindsight is Always 20/20, 2008
 detail: George Washin / 1789-1797 set of 43 letterpress print - 41 eye chart 1 title 1 synopsis linenportfolio box- each print 21,25 x 28,25 / 54x 72
 Photo courtesy bilforms gallery nyc - photo by John Berens

Pasquale Napolitano: About another technical and technological experiment which you dealt with: what exactly is the “time-laps phonography”? The name itself seems an invitation to synesthesia. How did you apply this technique to your technical research?

Luke Dubois: “Time-lapse phonography” is a technique I developed to create a sound-equivalent to long-exposure photography. It eliminates time from a time-based medium (sound or music), leaving a gestalt impression of the sound akin to an image. I was trying to get at the sound that rings in your “mind’s ear” after the concert finishes. On a more banal level, it’s an interesting way to derive the average frequency spectrum of a piece of music for analytic purposes.

I use averaging a lot in my work, and a lot of music that I create derives from a creative investigation of time as something that a musician can stretch

and compress and fold to make new compositions. I have synesthesia, so that’s certainly influential in a lot of my techniques, but the process also speaks to the data-neutrality of the computer. My computer won’t complain if I translate a sound into a picture and back again, but most commercial software discourages those kinds of digression.

Pasquale Napolitano: One category that seems to me essential in your artistic career is the “archive”, as an analytical tool but also as a creative possibility. As in the series *(Pop) Icon*, in which you created a portrait of Britney Spears, processing already existing and publicized images. Or again, in *Best picture*, a formal and aesthetic processing of the first 75 years of the Academy Awards. How do you choose the data sources on which to work? How do you decide the kind of process that these materials undergo?

Luke Dubois: Americans are obsessed with canonicity, though most of us don’t think particularly hard about the origins of many of these canons. So the “data sources” or “archives” in these pieces are things we consider the “best”. By accelerating, or blurring, or generatively remixing the material, you can find out interesting things about the work and how we look at it. The Academy Awards are a peer review, chosen by people who

are themselves eligible to win the award. It's a decidedly non-democratic process that millions of Americans watch and enjoy, convinced that we somehow participated in or validated these choices, as if it were some kind of "American Idol".

However, an accelerated "history" of the films shows a lot about the history of cinema: how shoots are used, how edits are made, how music works, how actors move, that are reflected in our cultural zeitgeist at the moment.

As for Britney Spears, I find her fascinating because she is the first pop star to come of age entirely in the age of AutoTune and Photoshop. We never hear her or see her without the aura of digitally-enhanced "perfection" that her record and video producers apply to her. So to take my metaphor of portraiture to a further point of removal, Britney is not only a highly subjective person (she exists only as we interpret her), but she is a "digitally perfected" person as well, in the way in which she is mediatized.



R. Luke Dubois - (Popp) Icon: Britney, 2010 - video, cast wood frame, screen with player, speakers 21.5 x 19.5 x 67 54.6 x 49.5 x 15.2 cm - 60 min, loop - Edition of 6 Photo courtesy bitforms gallery nyc - Photo by John Berens

Pasquale Napolitano: The question that mostly intrigues me: how did your artistic path, among images and sound, start? And, more in general, what were the artists and movements that mostly influence you?

Luke Dubois: I was trained as a composer, and have been performing a lot of improvised, avant-garde music using electronics since the 1990s. From 1996-2003 I performed in a band called The Freight Elevator Quartet that integrated video into our performances on a regular basis, using cameras that the audience could work to project themselves onto the stage with us, creating a type of audience-performer interactivity that helped to overcome the alienating effect of performing with so much computer technology.

At the same time I began writing a lot of chamber music using algorithmic methodologies that would be "visualized" on a projection at the same time they were played by

musicians; this served as a type of aesthetic amplifier for the work that helped to embody the compositional technique I was working with and make it more transparent and accessible to the audience. Once I began to develop a performative visual language, I began performing as a live visualist with other composers, other musicians, and became interested in working in video, animation, film, text...

I was strongly influenced early on by the work of Greek composer Iannis Xenakis, who was trained as an architect and had, implicit in his music, a deep understanding of politics and his own experience during the Second World War; however abstract or statistical or formalized the compositions became over his career, he was creating the sound of war, of his youth, of his experience, and he wrote often that any artistic concept could be realized with equal validity in any medium. That resonated with me in my search for sonic or visual metaphors to work with in my pieces.

I was also influenced by John Cage and the New York avant-garde of the 1970s in their approach to sonic and musical form and their willingness to take risks. On the visual side, I am a big fan of Stan Brakhage and his films, as well as appropriation artists and musicians like Emergency Broadcast

Network, John Oswald, and Negativland. Most of my influences come from artists I've met or worked with thought: people like Toni Dove, Elliott Sharp, Matthew Ritchie, Michael Grey, Maya Lin, have all given me a lot to think about in terms of how their imagination intersects with their practice.



R. Luke Dubois - Academy, 2006 - Dvd video, stereo sound
76 minutes - Edition of 10
Photo courtesy bitforms gallery nyc - photo by John Berens

Pasquale Napolitano: “Time” seems to be another essential category in your work (thinking about your time-lapse work like *Fashionably Late For The Relationship*), and it refers to a wide area of experimentation (from cheap art to programmed art). So, what is your particular way of using this category as a tool for creation?

Luke Dubois: Time is the a funny thing: we're told in school that it's the one constant dimension, subject only to general relativity. We as individual actors in space have no control over its forward motion; at the same time, all of us know that it's incredibly

subjective. So our experience of time is a perfect artistic subject for someone who lives in a culture where we're always running out of it.

Fashionably Late looked at time through the lens of gender relations, public and private spaces, and obsessive romantic love. Why does your date take so long? Why do you stare at the phone waiting for her/him to call? Why does it seem like years pass instead of days when you are apart from someone you love? How does emotion impact something we're told is constant?

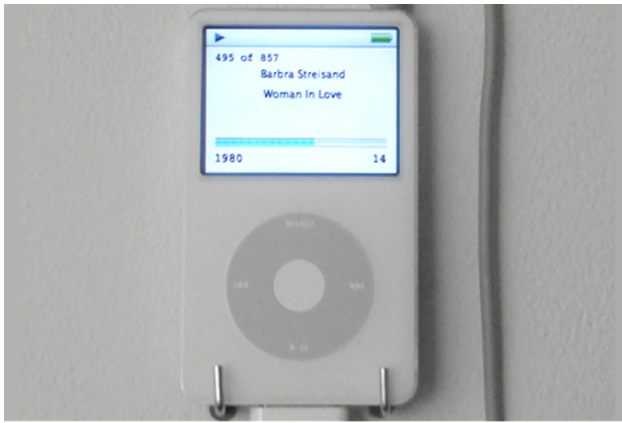
The time-compression I use is based on averaging, not time-lapse, so the film consists of every moment of the 72 hours compressed into an hour-long film. That piece was very much a collaboration, and Lián's performance was self-directed; all I did was serve as documentary director during the actual shoot. The edited film, though, takes her performance, which is full of symbolism about gender maintenance and how women relate to themselves in public and private, and reverses the viewpoint to how a (male) lover might accelerate and blur and selectively edit that information.

Pasquale Napolitano: I would finally come back to your exhibition at Bitforms. How was the relationship with the gallery? Bitforms worked more as a production entity, from a

purely economic perspective, or did it also take care of the creative choices?

Luke Dubois: I've been working with Steve Sacks and Laura Blereau since late 2005 and have done a lot of projects with the gallery. I also work regularly with a team of producers, Dana Karwas and Gabriel Winer, who help me with the production phases of most of my pieces. Bitforms produced *Perfect Union* because, as a digital print show, it's a reasonably modest investment, and we all agreed it was important to have a complete set of the maps printed and mounted, available for touring at museums.

We have a very creative working relationship; bitforms creates a lot of opportunities for me in terms of exhibitions and commissions for new work, and they assist when necessary in getting the pieces made. Unlike a lot of fine artists who work with studios and have assistants, I prefer to collaborate on a peer level with other creative people, so I work on projects with people who are equally invested in coming up with a good vision.



R. Luke Dubois - Academy, 2006 - Dvd video, stereo sound
76 minutes - Edition of 10
Photo courtesy bitforms gallery nyc - photo by John Berens

Pasquale Napolitano: Are you now working on some new projects? It is typical of a Renaissance artist to never stop planning...

Luke Dubois: The next couple of pieces I'm working on involve music: one is a performance for Prospect.2, the biennial curated by Dan Cameron in New Orleans. It will be a large performance for high-school marching bands turned into a generative film document of the

work. Another is a series of audiovisual portraits of avant-garde musicians in New York City using a 300fps camera and special audio recording equipment, to take 6 minute performances on their instruments and turn them into very slow-motion one-hour-long video portraits.

I'm also writing a co-textbook for MIT press, working a lot with the ISSUE Project Room on developing some technology for multi-channel sound and video performance, and performing with some excellent musician friends. 2011 should be a very good year.

<http://www.bitforms.com/index.php>

<http://music.columbia.edu/luke/>

Alfredo Costa Monteiro.ephemeral Matter and Unstable Procedures

Barbara Sansone



Alfredo Costa Monteiro, Tim Olive - Sound Project

Let's continue our exploration on Barcelona's independent musical panorama. This time we have decided to interview Alfredo Costa Monteiro, Portuguese musician living in this town since almost twenty years and enriching it with his artistic practices.

It is reductive to define him as a musician: it has been only a few years since Alfredo is devoted to sound, and yet his background is much more eclectic and deeply rooted in the visual arts. He completed his studies at the Fine Arts School of Paris and his artistic productions range from culture and installations (in which sound was anyway ever present), to visual poetry and musical experimentation. His works are based on the manipulation of objects and matter (sound and word included)

through instable procedures and low-fi constantly absorbed by research.

In his past he has been member of independent collective groups such as 22a and IBA col.lectiu d'improvisació (we talked about that in our interview with Ruth Barberán

(<http://www.digicult.it/digimag/articloe.asp?id=1939>). He is now playing

regularly solo or with international musicians (the likes of Pascal Battus and Michel Doneda), video artists and choreographers. He is working with many musical formations, such as Cremaster (with Ferran Fages), I treni inerti (with Ruth Barberán), Ocatante (with Ferran Fages, Ruth Barberán and Margarida Garcia), Atolòn (with Ferran Fages and Ruth Barberán), Tellus (with Pilar Subirà) and Monolith (with Juan Matos Capote). He can play accordion, electric guitar, electro acoustic devices and sound objects.



Alfredo Costa Monteiro

Barbara Sansone: Would you please tell me something about your formation and your studies in the music field?

Alfredo Costa: When I was 10 years old my father gave me an accordion and I had lessons from a friend of mine. Some years later I joined the conservatory, where I studied classic guitar for two years, but then I quit. It was such a hard discipline: during the first year one could not even touch the instrument; only theory was studied and when one is 13 his only wish is to play. But while I was there, my teacher, despite he was rather severe, introduced me to electro acoustics. There was a hall nearby where one could listen to it. It was a very small hall, yet provided with ten speakers and very comfortable armchairs. I went there, turned off the light and listened. A new world was revealed to me.

Then, as a teenager, I began playing guitar and singing in rock bands (or

rather punk bands). After my adolescence I began to carry out some technical studies, but I did not like them very much and so I decided to join Fine Arts. To prepare myself and enter the faculty I studied plastic arts at the Paris 8 University, that was the continuation of Vincennes, where in May of 1968 were born the first students communities. That was one of the first universities to ever be really leftist and the environment was completely different. It had been a lucky case for me, for I did not know what I could find there: I joined it only for I lived nearby, yet when I entered it I saw clearly what I wanted.

At that time, that university was a breath of fresh air in the public school panorama. It had very particular dynamics: some people practically were living inside it, there were no marks, there were labs everywhere and the lessons were like open forums and debates. Moreover, one was obliged to study some other matters in other departments (as it has always been in France, but here the ratio was even higher), an aspect that allowed one to discover unknown activities and topics. It created a peerless education. Among the professors there were also important people like philosophers Jean-François Lyotard and Gilles Deleuze (who unfortunately went away two years before I entered). A place of total creation, though much chaotic too. The will to

learn reigned supreme, but maybe a little more strictness was needed.



Alfredo Costa Monteiro - Piss & Laugh - Sound Installation

Barbara Sansone: And yet despite that, it helped you very much, didn't you?

Alfredo Costa: Absolutely. It let me discover a lot of things. When I entered I did not know very well what I wanted to study: I was interested in art, but I did not know whether to head for history or criticism. A year later I clearly understood I was interested in practice and not theory. Then I began preparing myself for the contest, in order to be admitted to Fine Arts, and that happened three years later. I stayed three years in there. The standard duration was five years, but one could ask for an advance conclusion and I thought three years were sufficient. I had my work analyzed by a commission that grant me a degree. Then I moved to Barcelona.

Barbara Sansone: When you moved to Barcelona, you soon found a suitable environment for you...

Alfredo Costa: That's right, for in Barcelona the world of art was tiny at that time (and now too, to be honest) and so all became real soon enough. They were the times when the first open labs began to appear, above all in the Raval hotel. All the artists lived in that neighborhood (someone also in the Poblenou), especially in Calle Riereta, where I found a lab as well.

Barbara Sansone: And what did your work consist in?

Alfredo Costa: At the beginning I was working a lot with images and photos. My works were very delicate: I worked with tiny object, lights, images and sound of course. They were conceptual works, yet tangible too. I liked to mix these two aspects very much, that is to base the work on a concept without taking away too much importance from the form. Form is just as constant as concept in my works. The objects of my installations made reference to memory.



Alfredo Costa Monteiro - Pascal Battus - Sound Project

Barbara Sansone: Unless I am wrong, you studied with Christian Boltanski. Did he influence you?

Alfredo Costa: I did studied with him, but when I entered Fine Arts and knew him I was already working on this topic. I actually did not study with him directly, but with Polish artist Piotr Kowalski, who was using particular materials like dynamite and neon lights. I began my activity in his lab, but I did not like the environment for it was too competitive, and so I moved into Boltanski's.

When I got information about him I discovered our works had much in common, but his reference to memory was unilateral (he works on the memory of the Holocaust), while my path was more autobiographical. I liked it very much too because in a step of his path he too worked on his past. My topic was nomadism, with references to the history of my family that moved from Portugal to France.

Then here in Barcelona I began working less and less with image: the objects became lighter and lighter, almost inexistent. I have always worked with poor and simple objects, and little by little my works were becoming more characterized by sound and less by objects. The ones remaining had a less and less autobiographical meaning. Then in 2006 I quit with the installations and dedicated only to music, that had overcome the objects by far in my interests.

Barbara Sansone: And in the meantime, did you keep on working on exclusively musical works?

Alfredo Costa: Yes, I did. I never quit with music. After my experiences with some bands in my adolescence I kept on playing and recording home (I still have lots of recording tapes!). And I kept a musical activity while I was working with installations: in the 80s for example I worked for various dancing companies writing melodies for them.

From 1995 until the formation dissolved, I played in a group of experimental music, called Superelvis, that was important then. Their CDs were conventional, they had rhythm and melody, while live the singer chanted a psalmody of four sentences and the other three musicians tried to intone something to prevent him from

singing. It was a very curious group. When it dissolved in 2000 I entered little by little the experimentation scenario.



Atolo I Un - Sound Project - Photo by Enric Coromina Vidal

Barbara Sansone: Let's talking about one of the most important instruments for you, the accordion...

Alfredo Costa: Yes, the accordion has always been the most important instrument for me. I played it in contexts of folk and traditional music. Then for some time I put it to rest because I had discovered other kinds of expression (punk, for instance) and I retook it later when I was studying Fine Arts, but still in classical and folkloristic fields. I played with some friends in bars: they did not pay us but we drank for free and we played French traditional music. We passed from bar to bar and we reduced ourselves to a pitiful state [he laughs], but we had a lot of fun.

Then I quit again and I reused the instrument here in Barcelona, with

Superelvis. I did a lot of tonal improvisations with them: I did not play accordion as I do now, of course not, but I used tonalities that often clashed, came and went away; they were like suspended...

Barbara Sansone: And when did this new approach to the instrument come?

Alfredo Costa: Later. I began attending IBA collective's concerts at Jazz Si, every Monday. I made the musicians' acquaintance, I got closer to that world and they invited me to join them. From that day on I developed a far more personal language with that instrument.

Barbara Sansone: Languages are not totally new to your creative activities, given the fact that you, being a poet, work with language as well...

Alfredo Costa: Yes, there is a link between them. I teach languages and exploit them into poetry, that in turn works with sound and sometimes has to do with plastic arts. Everything is linked. As for poetry, I recently put it aside a little and it is a shame because I have been very prolific for many years, but like I said, it's complicated. It is even a tinier world that experimental music's: it is difficult to enter and there is much competition. Moreover, the kind of poetry I write is not easy to classify, it depends on the

circumstances and my work places me in a sort of “no man’s land”.

This tires you out too. I keep on writing on my own. I have plenty of works at home but I do not expose them since a long time. I collaborated for years with Leos Ator, a French poet living here in Barcelona, but in many places people could not understand what we were doing. It was a strange form of sound poetry: much physical and powerful on a sound level when performed live. It was musical experimentation, too much for the places where poetry is recited on stage, and if you insert the words in the context of musical experimentation it does not work either. Some festivals care about this but there are really few of them.

And I lack the energy to go and search for opportunities now. Here in Barcelona I made only one performance of sound poetry, and not because they put me in the schedule: I made it myself, for that work should have been existed and I thought it was right people knew it, but in France it could have worked. Not here. Maybe because I work much with French.



Cremaster - Sound Project

Barbara Sansone: What do you think when you are playing? What do you imagine? How do you reason and make your decisions?

Alfredo Costa: That’s a mystery for me. I can tell you that my approach changes depending on the context. It is not the same when I play solo or in a formation, with people I barely know or others I knew since many years. It is very difficult to reason for basically my music is very intuitive, being improvised. And yet even the term “improvisation” can be deceiving. After so many years...I would not say I am an improviser and it seems to me that to call someone with that word is like to call him as he is the suspect in a process, it sounds absurd to me. In my music there is much improvisation, this is sure as hell.

Barbara Sansone: It would not be conceived a priori, but there is code, a language of your own, or many languages like that, depending on the

context...

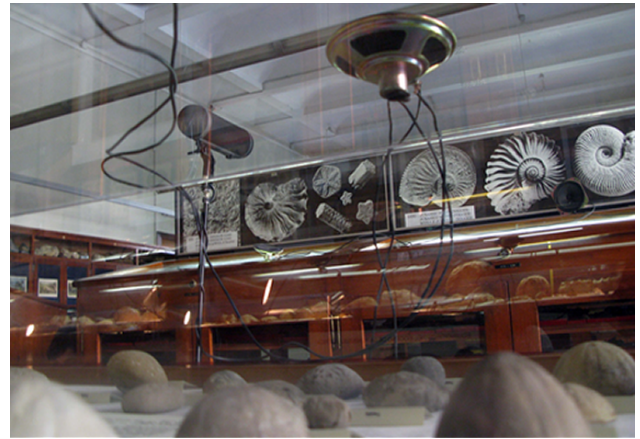
Alfredo Costa: Yes, that's right, yet I must ask myself up to what point I am improvising. I am not worried about that, but I think I am not improvising any longer. The act of improvising should be pure, it should not have memory and undoubtedly a memory has remained after many years. Even your body has reminiscences: when you are playing, it precedes you in a certain sense.

Barbara Sansone: Do you think you are repetitive?

Alfredo Costa: Yes, I do. I am repetitive. And this is the great question of improvisation: how can you reach the point of no repeating? We are human, we cannot reach it. Nonetheless, I do not care much about the fact I am repetitive: I am worried more about the context in which it happens. If the context is the same the repetition does not make sense, but when the context changes, the repetition could work the same because it is like a "trademark". Yet this music should be a constant research of something new and different.

This is our task, though we are not always capable of accomplishing it. When I attend to a concert as a spectator, I do not go there in search of something new. That's very difficult

to find. All is the transformation of something else and often we lack the historic perspective in order to know whether something we are listening is new or not.



Orbitulina Lenticularis - Sound Project

Barbara Sansone: Are there any musician you like and never disappoint you whatever they do? In other words, if you are not searching for something new, what are you searching for? What do you expect to find?

Alfredo Costa: I do not know, maybe it is emotion I pursue. Generally speaking, in this music there are not criteria, or at least there should not be any. I try not to be conditioned by prejudices when I am attending to a concert. For instance, I have listened to Francisco Lopez's music many times and personally I do not like too much how he works, he does not surprise me, he does not excite me, but in a hour we will go to his concert and I intend to go there with a new and different attitude, though I

already know him. I believe that at a certain point, if you have listened to a musician many times and you never liked him, perhaps you should come to the conclusion that you do not like him very much.

But in disciplines like this, and especially in the case of improvised music, I think good and bad should not exist. I actually try and shut up when I find myself judging, because in this field judging does not make sense. All is very subjective. Even when I realize that the level of sound is technically low, I soon enough think that maybe it is the musician's will and thus it has a sense. Rather than talking about quality, I prefer to say whether a performance reaches me or not. Sometimes it happens that something about quality escapes my mouth, but soon I bite my tongue. It is neither good nor bad, it is what it is, and that's the important thing in this music.

Barbara Sansone: Don't you think that this lack of criteria, this sort of opening, in a certain sense leads to the proliferation of productions that are not based on a tradition however existing, or to the reasonable breaking of rules that we are willing to overcome? Many people claim this music is all about making noise, and within anyone's reach too. Don't you think that this way the musician's

professionalism ends up being ignored??

Alfredo Costa: What you say is true, but it is true as well that often novice musicians are involved, and they need and deserve time to develop a language of their own, just like it happened to me many years ago. The public has the right to judge in the end. If it understands the artist has not changed through time (unless it is a stylistic choice or a concept) it is not going to listen to him any longer.



Monolith - Sound Project

Barbara Sansone: Do you think public has the necessary instruments to judge or should it been educated by offering quality contents to it? We can see this in commercial music: according to you many musicians should not exist anymore for a long time and yet people keep on buying their discs and paying high prices for their concerts. It is however true the public in question is another. Your music is characterized by a more specialized and maybe more exigent

public...

Alfredo Costa: Public is an interesting topic: I see it as a sum of many individuals, and then as a mysterious entity in the end. Save for friends, you do not know who comes and listen to you playing. Therefore, I am not trying to please someone in my works, for I do not know whom I should please. And however, if I thought like that I would not do what I do. But I do respect very much the public, this “unknown factor”, because I think that if a person, tired after a hard day of work, comes and listen to me, he is making a considerable effort and this action deserves great respect.

To have respect not necessarily means to play something he likes, but I cannot forget those people came on purpose to listen to my music: it is not like playing home or at the rehearsals. My approach is always different, specific for each concert, and this is a ritual where the artist has to sacrifice himself in a certain sense. Without this ethical and human criterion there is nothing. The public is what sustains me, without it I would not even exist as an artist. And yet I cannot please it, or adapt my music on the base of a set of preferences I do not know.

<http://www.costamonteiro.net/>

Paolo Cirio. When Stealing Becomes Art

Tatiana Bazzichelli



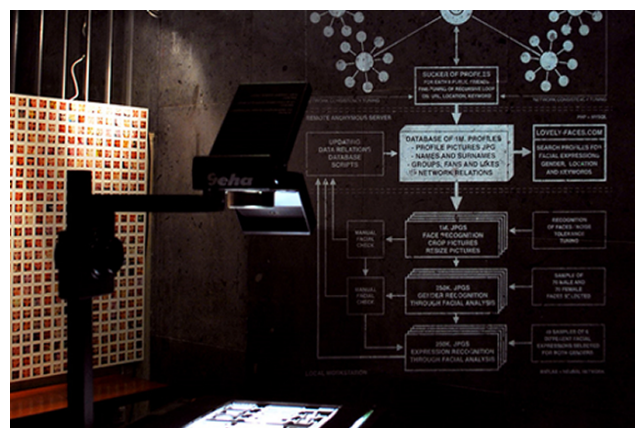
Paolo Cirio, Alessandro Ludovico - Face to Facebook

In the essay *The author as a producer* (1934), Walter Benjamin describes the author's role through the figure of the engineer. Instead of reproducing the production apparatuses, the author/engineer is able to intervene within them, transforming the cultural production function itself and opening it up to the collective intervention.

The engineer figure described by Walter Benjamin reminds the “tactical” art by Paolo Cirio, who contributes to transform the meaning of the artistic practice from within, by unveiling the unsolved knots in the art field. Through his artworks, Paolo Cirio (<http://www.paolocirio.net>) intervenes tactically locating some plugs of a puzzle which can be finished only by directly involving its referents, being them either corporations, media apparatuses, or

the so-called network “users”.

His artworks, some of which were created together with [Alessandro Ludovico](#) and [Ubermorgen.com](#) (*GWEI, Google Will Eat Itself e Amazon Noir*), some others were created individually (such as *Drowning NYC, The Big Plot e Open Society Structures*), redefine the author's and art's role, which becomes a premise to think over social and political dynamics. By manipulating the media and the news media, as he himself claims, his work “often pushes the boundaries of the representation, going beyond the use of a single media and focusing on the information environment created by the data flow.”



Paolo Cirio, Alessandro Ludovico - Face to Facebook, Mxmedia Installation Transmediale 11

His artworks deal with the language,

the narrations, the creation of conspiracy plots, but also with the meaning of power, democracy, privacy and control. Not always without provoking contradictions and controversies. But it is just through this dynamic of the imperfect and the unknown once they are started, artworks are opened to possible developments and interpretations that it is possible to experiment how the information and media flows build their meaning.

This interview, starting from the description of the meaning of tactics and strategies applied to the artistic practice, and wondering about some concepts such as “the media robbery”, ends thinking over some sensible knots revealed by the last projects: Face to Facebook,

(
<http://www.paolocirio.net/work/face-to-facebook/face-to-facebook.php>)

created with Alessandro Ludovico and launched at the last Transmediale 2011, and P2P Gift Credit Card

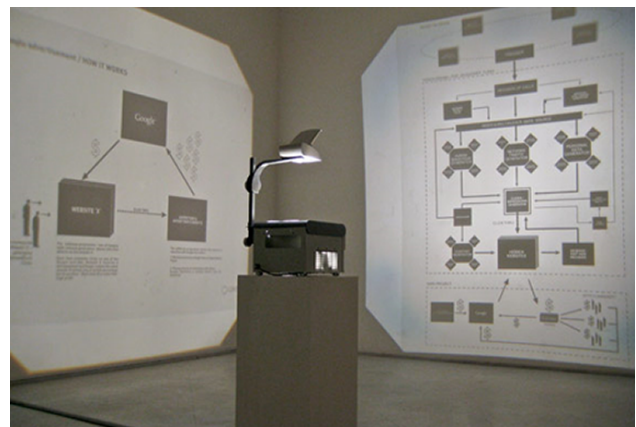
(
http://www.paolocirio.net/work/gift-finance/p2p_gift_credit_card.php)

protagonist of an action in London on March 25th, in which the “revolutionary” credit cards have been distributed in strategic places.

Both projects, exhibited at a next solo show, *REALITYFLOWHACKED*, which will open in Ljubljana on April 26th at

the [Aksioma Project Space](#), become an incentive through which analyzing the intersections between art and market, the contradictions and paradoxes of neoliberal capitalism, the artist’s role itself and, at the same time, the one of the user.

In the social media era, the relational dynamics and the information data flow become more and more part of the production processes, not often validating the utopian perspective assumed by Walter Benjamin in 1934. That is why it becomes central to reflect on such processes, imagining possible alternatives, provoking critical contradictions and producing new visions and experiences.



Paolo Cirio, Alessandro Ludovico - *Ubemorgen.com - Google will eat itself (2005)*
Mixed Media, dimension variable, installation in Naples at pan

Tatiana Bazzichelli: Let’s start from your artistic background: you define yourself as a “tactical media artist”. Your first work, which dates back to 2001, is entitled *STOP the NATO*. Later, after an intense activity in the street art field, the target broadened

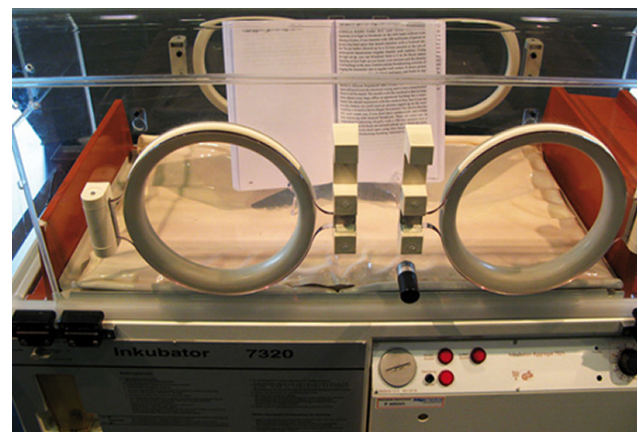
itself to corporations such as Google (2005), Amazon (2006) and Facebook (2011) and the credit card system (2010-11), transferring your knowledge of advertising media to the creation of artistic strategies and hacker practices. At the same time, you focused on the art of storytelling, coming up with plots and characters in which reality and fiction complement each other (2009-10). How would you tactically link these experiences?

Paolo Cirio: First of all I would like to make a distinction between strategy and tactic. I prefer to define “tactic” the study and the choice of mediums and the way to use them, almost at a technical level. Whereas “strategy” pertains to the planning of coordinated actions towards goal achievement. I define myself as “tactical” mainly because my practices involve media affordable for everyone, but used in a creative way and extended beyond the limits of their features.

As far as I am concerned, this operative modality was dictated by practical needs: when I started I used pieces of electronics found in the streets, because of the lack of budget and even now I create my projects with very cheap media. These tools, if they are used well in an accurate strategic planning context, can have an extremely high social impact.

Furthermore tactical media art requires a theoretical knowledge and a constant reference to the artistic scene in order to compare experiences and knowledge.

However, rather than tactics and strategies, which are essential to the political developments of my works, I would say that what links all my projects is an aesthetic fil rouge. Recently I like to see myself as a sculptor: in all my works I process different data and information to shape new structures. By setting data into new context, aggregating and fabricating it, I shape new and unexpected compositions of information. In sculpture every material keeps its intrinsic properties after the mutation: in the case of information, it is about the power of influencing society. I believe that the social, economic and political realities can be created and shaped through processing and managing information.



Paolo Cirio, Alessandro Ludovico, UBERMORGEN.COM - Amazon noir (2006)
Mixed Media, dimension variable, installation in Naples at transmediale festival

For example in the project against NATO it was about aggregating news (at the time it was the first forms of blogging and the beginning of Indymedia networks) related to new wars by the western military organization. Through these tools I was able to influence activists against the wars at an international level and to be perceived as a threat by the America's Department of National Defence.

This was achieved not thanks to geopolitical analysis, although the articles in the website were more than a thousand, but to the way in which information was managed through a platform created ad hoc and spread into the international pacifist's networks. I consider aggregation processes like that as sculptures of information up and running that are able to affect effectively a large number of people, just like it happened with the recontextualization and subversion of Facebook, Amazon and Google data.

At the same time I became interested in the creation of new realities through what I defined as Recombinant Fiction: the research on experimental storytelling forms which make use of different media and which intertwine reality and fiction through characters played by professional actors. In other terms it is about sculpting new realities by

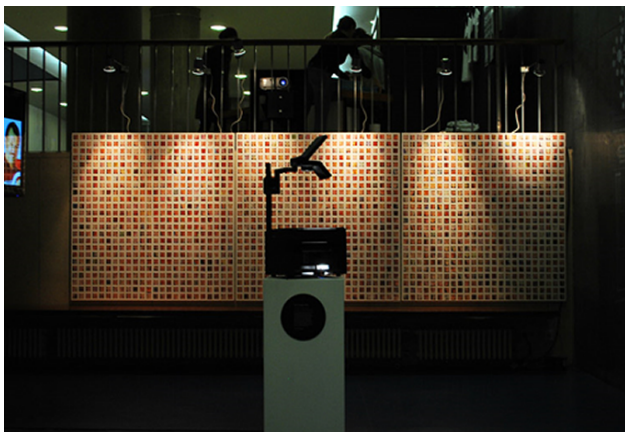
orchestrating and arranging information into narrations, which the public is captured by or immersed in.

Reality is constantly fabricated by the media, through the creation of stories in which the audience can recognise the fixed types of characters in the storytelling and engage with them. The villain against the hero, love or crime stories: the mass media tend to reduce every event to stories which remind soap opera's plots, a strategy used because the human brain interprets reality and its own conscience through the narrative form. In the same way many people build their identity on social media, which unavoidably function as theatrical stages turning us into the actors playing our lives transformed into shows.

Reality as narration is not something new, let's just think about the role that religions or ideologies have narratively transfigured the real and its agents. However nowadays stories are multiplied and are much more fragmented, due to the enormous number of media and consumption/production of information, and so together with them our perception of reality varies as well. These narrative potentials of new media can be used to create stories and therefore alternative realities, able to bring us back to the awareness of the duplicity of what's

real, by dedramatizing it.

Since I often work at a practical and theoretical level with all these aspects of information manipulation, inevitably I have the impression of handling something almost tangible and of being able to shape it by giving it different shapes.



Paolo Cirio, Alessandro Ludovico - Face to Facebook, Mxmedia Installation Transmediale 11

Tatiana Bazzichelli: The thread that connects the *GWEI*, *Amazon Noir* and *Face to Facebook* projects is the practice of “media fraud”. In the first case the attention is focused on the Pay To Click business frauds and on the click frauds; in the second case, you became the small-time crooks (with Alessandro Ludovico and Ubermorgen.com) “stealing” Amazon’s digital books; in the third case, a million of Facebook profiles were “stolen”. How does the fraud become a media tactic and why is it so pivotal for you?

Paolo Cirio: The stealing is glamorous

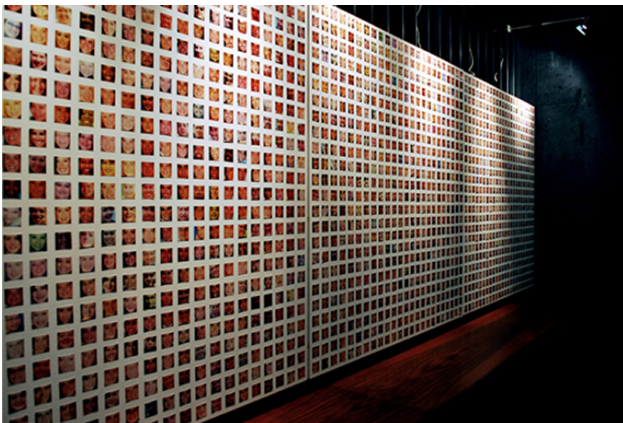
and spectacular; a proof of that is that also the main stream news covered our projects. It is about a language strategically used to draw the media’s attention and hence the common people’s attention who are victims of the monopolies. Although in some cases rather than language, we speak of a proper robbery. In the *Amazon Noir*, my passion for books pushed me to try to take as much as I could of them.

However I am not a criminal, what is defined as stealing constitutes for me an artistic research with a particular kind of material, which I consider to be naturally free and of public domain. Unfortunately corporations get possession of it for their business, protecting it with laws custom made for them. If tomorrow Facebook will own all the photos of the world, every photographer would become a criminal.

I work with information, something that is precious and inflammable like gasoline, and just touching it is dangerous. For the sake of the common good, information should be available, independent and interpretable. Despite that our century seems to have plenty of it, there is still a long way to go to find adequate ways of managing it. As an artist I stress the limits of the material to get to know its nature better and to create something unexpected and

original.

In the case of *Face to Facebook*, for example, the lawyers and the journalists involved will keep on asking themselves for a long time if using a million Facebook profiles without asking for permission is illegal, or if it is just like an action comparable to a photoshoot in a crowded stadium. In my case, when I realized that I could take hundreds of thousands of profiles in few hours, I was interested in using such an incredible and rich material for something amazing and socially useful, without being able to foresee the legal and political consequences.



Paolo Cirio, Alessandro Ludovico - Face to Facebook, Mxmedia Installation Transmediale 11

Tatiana Bazzichelli: The art of stealing is a recurring theme of the three projects, but it is also what makes them different. In the case of *GWEI* and *Amazon Noir*, your tactic seems to be more similar to the Robin Hood's one. It is evident in *Google To The People*, the public institution that collects and redistributes the Pay to

Click's revenues, and also in the redistribution of Amazon's books through the P2P channels. While in the case of *Face to Facebook*, the people's profiles are stolen, filtered and posted on a custom-made dating portal. In a way, *F2F* seems to be disadvantaging users rather than favouring them. What is your point of view?

Paolo Cirio: Setting thousands of people free from a prison and bringing them to a speed dating party, seems to me to be a noble action (take a look at the video

Tatiana Bazzichelli: Like *TG Daily* points out in the article about *F2F* (<http://www.tgdaily.com/software-brief/53936-dating-site-steals-25-000-facebook-profiles>), your and Ludovico's scraping operation is paradoxically similar to the Facebook genesis, when Mark Zuckerberg created *FaceMash*, "stealing" his Harvard colleagues' profiles and pictures. *Face to Facebook* could therefore be seen as a commercial operation, making your logic differ little from the one of a business company. Not by chance we read in one of your recent press announcement that you received 13 offers of business partnerships after your "performance". What's the boundary between art and business in *F2F*?

Paolo Cirio: Yes, it is true; most of the big firms' business is based on other's goods and time. Exploitation of resources which someone else owns or produces at a lower price or even for free, just like in the case of the private social media platforms like Facebook.

Face to Facebook, project was about a parody of the business world, just like in the Drowning NYC project. Language, practices and corporate interests were brought to the extremes, almost by making fun of them. Although these operations may be seen as classic detournement of the language, or similar variations, in both projects there are important strategic and aesthetic innovations.

In the Face to Facebook case, a custom software was the medium which turned information into a new form for a new contextualisation, characteristic common to each trilogy's project. While in Drowning NYC, what could be a classic prank, fake or hoax operation evolved into a proper narrative by recognisable characters with intertwined lives and precise psychologies. My background and my education come from the Situationism and the first Net Art, but I always try to insert new artistic evolutions.

Then there is always someone who doesn't get the poetry, the tale, the

humour, and someone who takes jokes and fiction too seriously. I received business partnerships offers by North American companies, which invest in the conversion of civil infrastructures, following rising sea level caused by global warming.

The *Future Water Proof Corp.* website is still now visited by firms and public administrations from all over the world, since this problem is a reality that many coastal cities are trying to cope with. The same thing happened with the credit cards, many people started using them to try to pay for small daily shopping, they were all people from the same social status on whose naivety credit card societies are trying to exploit.

In sum, my audience is not so much the ones of the expositive spaces, but the ones of the specific targets that I want to influence.



Paolo Cirio - P2p gift credit card, gift finance (2010) - Photo by Anna Bosch Tormens

Tatiana Bazzichelli: One of your last projects is the P2P Gift Credit Card.

Here art and business clearly meet. What is the financial model that you suggest and in which way may it metaphorically constitute an alternative?

Paolo Cirio: I do not consider Gift Finance to be a kind of business, which usually has to do with private interests, but more an alternative economy of public interest. The project was born from the idea of universal Basic Income directly regulated by the networks of relationships that link people together at local and global level. Universal Basic Income means that every human being has the right to have money in order to survive on this planet.

A possible system proofed by reliable calculations, not just since the present technological progress makes potentially possible to feed everyone on the planet or if the money deposited in the tax havens was redistributed, we could give dignity to half populations of the world. In reality, the main point is the immorality of the creation of money itself, regulated by banks and by the State to preserve the social control. We never want to believe that money can become an abundant good for everyone, but actually this is possible and history, even if rarely, has proved it.

Since most of the money in circulation has assumed a digital form, so it is virtual, money conceptions themselves and the tools to use it or eventually to create it have been redefined. The recent economic crisis, leaving its internal contradictions aside, as a matter of fact was started by software capable of complex calculations, interconnecting investors, funds, loans and debts in a speculative vortex. Such tools for simplifying monetary data management increased exponentially the number of financial operations and operators.

A context in which money is issued without any logic of value and in which financial institutions have the legal permission to create “virtual” money very easily, by granting loans, which exceed the “real” money that they have in their deposits, this just by few mouse click, is created. This kind of creation of money is called Fractional Reserve Banking. After having spent more than a year studying critical finance, I noticed that the majority of the analysis indicates that banks are the main creators of money through this financial tool called Fractional Reserve Banking, which is legally permitted for boosting the whole economy, but it’s actually managed for private interests, since only financial institutions can legally use it.



Paolo Cirio - P2p gift credit card, gift finance (2010) - Photo by Anna Bosch Tomens

The P2P Gift Credit Cards were created to democratize the money issuing power, which is monopolized by bank giants and by now in small part by the state. The economic model Gift Finance uses already developed infrastructures, as the credit cards capillary circuits, the technology for wiring money through univocal codes, and financial tools such as the Fractional Reserve Banking, without extra interest on the credit emitted.

So, everyone must have the right to lend money, which he/she doesn't have, just like banks are allowed to do, in order to stimulate the general economy. It can look like an utopic artistic vision, but if you take a closer look at it actually it can carry out positive out comes, like the Gift Economy has often proved. With the Gift Finance, economy is democratically stimulated by the people, instead of by private financial institutions, which on top of that revealed themselves to be

incompetent and were rescued by bailouts of public money which seems to be "mysteriously" lacking.

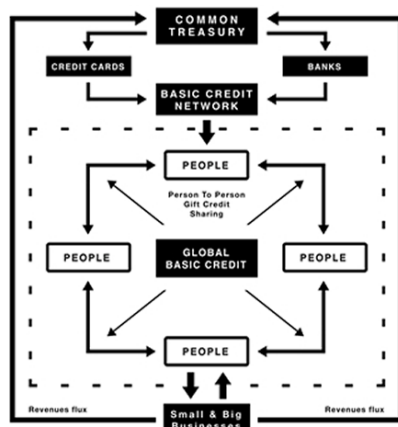
The P2P Gift Credit Cards are introduced to the public with a language familiar to the target, attractive graphics and marketing, to tempt and attract the target and then introduce critical finance matters. The credit card industry in UK and in the U.S. is completely deregulated, the most common victims are students and low-income workers, social classes always more in difficulty. The project, instead of sabotaging the current credit card system, tries to subvert it using the existing infrastructures in a better way.

The *P2P Gift Credit Cards* may start to be properly used widely for monetary trade when the number of people who joined the project will reach a critical mass. Money is just a symbolic means accepted collectively, so it's just about how many people literally believe in the same mean of trade.

Money has become pure information so it is an easily manipulable and reproducible abstract material, which floats in a global network always more connected and spread. The money perception has changed as well: what attracted the human eye the most were bills, now to stimulate the parts of the brain linked to greed it only takes seeing numbers on a monitor.

Recently some new media theorists supposed to revitalize the economy with new digital currencies created by the grassroots movements. However, nobody thinks about who will be eventually in charge to issue this new currencies, who will therefore be responsible of the amount of money in new alternative markets. In the meantime big networks, just like Facebook, are planning the introduction of a new internal virtual currency.

So the future of money still has to start and it will change many things. In the meantime, the credit cards circuits monopolize the technology of electronic payments at a global level, VISA and MasterCard faced already several antitrust suits, but they still dominate also through lobbying constantly.



Paolo Cirio - P2p gift credit card, gift finance (2010) - Diagram

Tatiana Bazzichelli: The themes of exchange, gift economy, and participation are fundamental nowadays to critically rethink the use

of networking technologies and to imagine possible alternative to neoliberalism. At the same time, today the social media economy is deeply based on the concept of exchange of free gifts and many profits come from user-generated contents. Do you think that imagining a Gift Finance System based on Peer2Peer networks could go beyond the dialectic participation vs. exploitation?

Paolo Cirio: Yes, I think about Peer-t-Peer as an enormous potential social progress. The decentralization of resources is a model applicable and revolutionary to different fields, such as the energetic, urbanistic, and food supply, etc. Peer-to-Peer means from the farmer to the consumer, from the solar panels to the refrigerator, etc., and of course also, concerning information, and financial management.

If I could dare a comparison with historic ideologies, I could say that the network distributed from Person to Person, can constitute a potential new form of political civilization. Communism as much as capitalism, are not a democratic systems, both are based on the decision-making power concentration in the hands of a few people, pinpointed in the State hierarchy in the case of the communism or in the big corporations and banks in the case of neoliberalism.

A well-informed population could manage itself with a direct and participative democracy through the use of free and independent networks. We went through a revolution with the introduction of digital technology, leaving the analog one behind. Now we are living a new phase, maybe even more important, which is the widespread of devices constantly online and with them the sharing of our data of our existences, which became deeply affected by digital networks.

However, you do not have to think of social media, like Facebook and Twitter, as Peer-to-Peer networks, it is the very opposite, actually: the concentration of all the personal data and contents in the hands of few, does not constitute an example of decentralized network for sure.

With the increasing number of people connected, power conglomerates were created to monopolize resources and market demand, just like in many other globalized industrial sectors dominated by big monopolies, and in which the alternatives are banned, even if they are technically and socially better. In this case I have the impression that they want to extinguish the Peer-to-Peer technology, just like it happened when the oil cartels suppressed alternative fuels vehicles and goods without crude oil's

derivates.



Paolo Cirio - P2p gift credit card, gift finance (2010) - Photo by Anna Bosch Torenns

Tatiana Bazzichelli: Both the Face to Facebook and the P2P Gift Credit Cards projects imply a process of data collection. In the first case, it is about 250.000 profiles catalogued on the basis of the facial expression, but maybe, the true resource is the additional data catalogued by you after the user's reaction (reported in your press release dated February 10); in the second case, the spreading of Gift Cards allows to generate income thanks to the involvement of its own network, through a virtual mailing system.

In both cases, the projects allow to have access to unreleased and important data, coming directly from the back-end functions of the systems. Are you planning to use such a stored data in a conscious and "tactical" way? Maybe thinking about a second phase of the two projects...

Paolo Cirio: Like you say, it is not

much the quantity of data that matters, but the relations which correlate information together and creates its sense. With the Facebook project as well, I could ascertain this equation: looking at a million of faces of people, I feel a terrible feeling of void, as if all of those individual lives, in the mass, blurred into something shapeless and valueless.

There is an information surplus: we do not live with censorship anymore, this for sure, but what was obscured by the lack, is now made it confusing by a controlled structuring of information, relating information to alter its meaning or possibly to nullify it. This became possible in the networks as well, those who should have theoretically set us free from the mass media power. There are tactics and strategies in order to relate information for interests of a few or of everyone, and I believe this dispute will last long.

In any case, not all information is relevant, if it is not used in the best way possible. For example, with pictures of a million of people on the hard disk, new ideas of how to reuse them constantly come up to my mind, being it such an interesting material, but I also think I took the best out of

them. Same thing for credit cards: there is more than one thousands of people with issued P2P Gift Credit Cards numbers, but the aim was not to collect and create new data, I just used the available and attractive means as a medium to suggest an alternative economic model, so making art with social functions.



Paolo Cirio - P2p gift credit card, gift finance (2010) - Photo by Anna Bosch Torrens

In the future I will concentrate always more on new ways and tools to model information and to explore the connected social, political and aesthetic consequences.

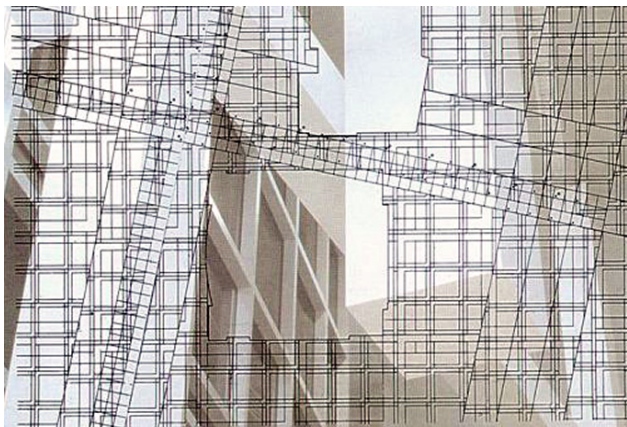
<http://www.paolocirio.net>

<http://www.amazon-noir.com/>

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Revealing Interstitial Spaces. Part 1

Eugenia Fratzeskou



Peter Eisenman, Wexner Centre for the Visual Arts and Fine Arts Library, Ohio State University, Columbus Ohio: 1983-8 9-[P. Eisenman, Diagram Diaries, Thames & Hudson, London, 1999, p. 114]

This essay offers an investigation into the notion of interstitial space and its creative exploration in various site-specific art practices as creatively realised mainly with the use of digital technology. This is the first part of this three-part essay.

Introduction

In contemporary site-specific art, there is a growing interest in exploring emerging 'in-between' spaces through a creative exploration of the possible inter-relationships between various types of reality and particularly, of the points of intersection that enable exchanges between those realities. This essay offers an investigation into the ways through which, potential interstitial spaces can be creatively revealed through various modes of innovative

spatial intervention such as, mixed realities, parallel sites, etc. The essay includes a discussion of various case studies taken from the international site-specific art scene and my art practice and research, with the emphasis placed on how diverse kinds of interstitiality can be revealed in a physical space, where perception levels and realities can be crossed.



Peter Eisenman, Wexner Centre for the Visual Arts and Fine Arts Library, Ohio State University, Columbus [photograph from <http://www.openbuildings.com/buildings/wexner-center-for-the-arts-profile-3126.html>]

Interstitial space

The very roots of the concept of interstitiality and interstitial space can be found in Plato's definition of (Chôra) that set the foundations of the concept of spatiality, place, and placing, while the influence of Plato's cosmology is evident even in contemporary science. Alongside 'Models/Ideals' and their 'imitations',

Chôra is defined as an 'invisible and formless receptacle... of all becoming' where 'Forms' are materialised, in a sense close to space.

The most important characteristic of Chôra [1] is that its relationship with its contents is a dynamic one, as Chôra interacts with its contents, while being simultaneously distinct from them in an "unexplainable and complicated way". [2]

A continuous becoming takes place, as asymmetry causes motion and change. Chôra is full of unbalanced and heterogeneous forces; she is both "shaken and shaking". [3] Shapes are created through ideas and numbers. In such creation of the universe, the elementary triangles of the elements are restructured. For instance, during the transitional phases of this creation process, cubes may be disorganised by been cut either at their edges or at the primary triangles from which they have originally derived, resulting in floating flat shapes. Diverse elements are "bonded" with each other through the use of mathematical analogies, so that, "intermediate definitions" are connected. [4] In such a way, a mathematical matrix characterises the Platonic Chôra and enables the 'birth' of forms. [5]

What is striking in the Platonic Chôra is that the role and workings of its mathematical matrix are more or less

similar to the ones of the algorithmic matrices of digital visualisation, modelling, and Virtual Reality systems. Attempting to draw an analogy or even, adapt the concept of Chôra to the level of digital creation, is an interesting challenge. In this case, our interpretation of Chôra may be closer to the concept of the digital matrix-and-flow relationship, the key elements of which are their interactions and exchanges. Nevertheless, such elements are by no means settled, predictable and ordered, as the algorithmic infrastructure of digital visualisation systems is affected by its inherent heterogeneity, abstraction, complexity, instability, and noise. [6]



Peter Eisenman, Wexner Centre for the Visual Arts and Fine Arts Library, Ohio State University, Columbus
[photograph from <http://www.openbuildings.com/buildings/wexner-center-for-the-arts-profile-3126.html>]

Such an argument invites us to investigate the Platonic Chôra in conjunction with the Platonic Cave, the allegory of which is used by Plato in his *Republic* for engaging with the notions of reality, perception, illusion. In the contemporary context of art

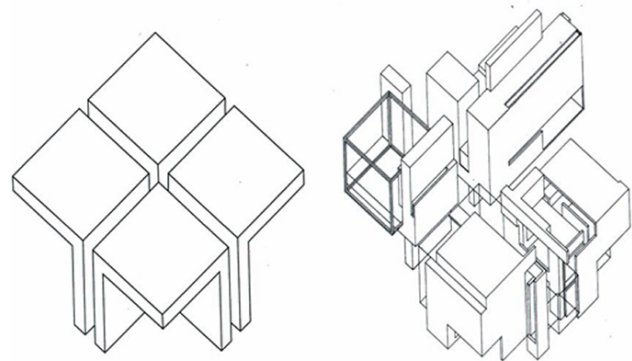
and science, the Platonic Cave can be redefined by extension, as a CAVE (Cave Automatic Virtual Environment) or a mixed-reality environment, where we can experience possible and other kinds of 'realities' as well as their changing relationships that may even reveal new kinds of perception, surpassing the limitations of a room-sized 'camera-obscura'.

It may be argued that it is essentially spaces of possibilities that can be produced through VR. Nevertheless, the possible may only leave as with a certainty. This is where VR is used for enabling a possibility to become a kind of 'reality' as a means of simulating or predicting reality, evoking thus, a sense of transparency, certainty and control.[7]

This situation reminds us of John Rajchman's writings on the possible. Indeed, as he explains: : " ... *the possible, whose realisation always leaves us the same,...* [is not] *something we must always experiment and work with in order to see...* [the possible does not] *confront us as a question or problem to which we don't know how to respond in advance.* [8]

Instead of simply applying known spatial concepts to VR, an array of questions arises, as for instance, what is at the other side of matter? Where and how can we draw the borderline

between reality, actuality, and virtuality? Or, going beyond such dialectics, what is the real in the virtual and vice versa? Would there be a possibility of tracing a 'third' intermediate condition and how? What could be the significance of achieving this?



Peter Eisenman, House X, Michigan, 1975 (P. Eisenman, Diagram diaries, pp.72.220)

In relation to the creative processes involved in architecture and site-specific art practices, an interesting possibility would be to interpret Chôra as a 'flow-and-ground' relationship with a more dynamic, interactive and thus surprising character. Conceiving Chôra as 'flow-and-ground' does not introduce a dialectical game that might eliminate one of its elements.

This kind of Chôra presents and emphasises the dialogue and interaction of its elements, but it does not privilege the domination of one over the other. It can be suggested that since 'flow' and 'ground' constantly modify themselves and

their relationship, their roles can be interchangeable. In an expanded metaphorical sense of poesis, the 'flow' flows from, into and through the 'ground's' particles, leaving its temporal 'imprints' on the 'ground's' substance. The intensity, speed, and direction of the 'flow' alter the 'ground'. The 'ground' neither does it preserve intact the previous input of the 'flow', nor does it erase it completely.

The concept of interstitial space, which has been investigated also in conjunction with Chôra in R. E. Somol's essays on Peter Eisenman's work, has been one of the dominant elements in Eisenman's architectural practice, both in terms of design process and end product. An interstitial space may be unexpected without being non-developmental. The notion of interstitiality is related closely to the workings of a diagram.

As Eisenman emphasises, a diagram 'occurs' between the stages of a project's completion. The crucial process of decision-making usually takes place between these stages.[9] In particular, the digital diagramming for projects such as, the **Wexner Centre**, is based on the processes of "mapping" and "artificial excavation". According to Anthony Vidler, Eisenman intends to retain the fluid non-dialectical consolidation of

functional and dysfunctional spaces. These spaces emerge from the virtual clashing of displaced topographical and structural grids. The interconnecting "pre-deconstructive" and "post-deconstructive" stances reinforce a non-narrative and discontinuous mode of 'reading' [10]



Peter Eisenman, Cannaregio Town Square, Italy, 1978 (P. Eisenman, Diagram diaries, p. 109)

In *House X* and *Cannaregio Town Square*, the architectural design elements interact with each other during the design process of imprinting, so that, they alter their contents and become altered by them at the same time. The manifestation of this "double work" shows evidence of equal mutual interaction. [11]

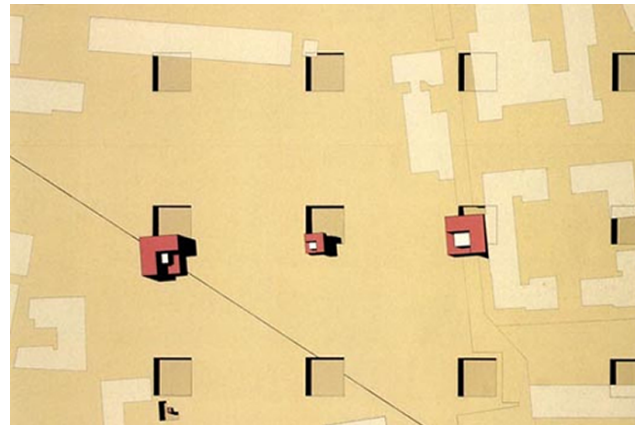
Consequently, in terms of a metaphorical analogy to the Platonic Chôra as 'flow-and-ground', the 'ground' is "overprinted" so much, that it influences the route of 'flow'. As an end-product, a building challenges the functional aesthetics of standard architectural types, as it essentially

comprises of an accumulation of 'leftovers' from various design stages.

In terms of digital site-specific art, the opportunity to reveal and challenge the relationships between diverse kinds of reality and perception can be achieved through exploring various types of interstitial space by using digital visualisation tools, VR and Virtual Environments for creating innovative as well as unsettling kinds of spatial intervention. Instead of being perceived as a 'ground zero', space is uncontrollably evolving and heterogeneous, as it has multiple layers of virtuality and reality. The influence of Quantum Physics and Manuel Castell's concept of 'informationalism' is particularly evident in the development of digital and media art. As Lev Manovich explains, *the new spatial logic can be described using such terms as visible/invisible; is no longer relevant: functions or fields, since from the point of view of these new technologies, every point in space has a particular value on a possible continuum.*

space as layers of data. This does not mean that the physical space becomes irrelevant... it is through the interaction of the physical space and the data that some of the most amazing art of our time is being

created. [12]



Peter Eisenman, Cannaregio Town Square, Italy, 1978 [photo from: <http://www.xoomer.virgilio.it>]

Through such an interaction, it is possible to surpass the limitations of producing a neat and settled hyperspace that would be characterised by the unity and continuity of spatial augmentation. One of the most challenging possibilities arising, would be to creatively reveal various interstitial spaces of emergence as stemming from complexity; from the invisible and unsettling 'potentiality fields' between the transitional states of spatial transformation and exchange. Imperceptibles and intermediates would emerge, as we unravel what is observable.

The latter can be perceived as the outcome of the various intersections of interacting fields and the ruptures that emerge from the changing and heterogeneous nature of the layers of space. An oscillation between atopias, utopias and dystopias may challenge

the established borderline between a plan, a map and a building, and its meaning. Such interstitial spaces can be revealed through using material/immaterial mediums as light and line as well as the processes of drawing and diagramming, for 'opening up' the 'interfaces' of thought, VR and built architecture.

Notes:

- [1] – Plato, *Timaeus & Critias* (with translation in modern Greek & comments by the Kaktos Literature Group), Ancient Greek Literature "The Greeks" Series 171, ed. Odysseus Chatzopoulos, Kaktos Publications, Athens, 1993, 50c – 51b, 52d (49a, 52b).
- [2] – Ibid, 51a-b.
- [3] – Ibid, 49d, 52d-e, 53a, 57c,e, 58a-c.
- [4] – Ibid, 57c-d, 56d, 31c. Comments Nos. 25 & 68, pp. 303, 313.
- [5] – Ibid, 27d. Comment No. 16, pp. 299-300. See also: Fratzeskou, Eugenia, "Chora Platonica & Digital Matrix", *Digimag*, No. 55, June 2010, <http://www.digicult.it/digimag/article.asp?id=1823>, Fratzeskou, Eugenia, *New Types of Drawing in Fine Art: The Role of Fluidity in the Creation Process*, LAP – Lambert Academic Publishing, 2010 and Fratzeskou, Eugenia, *Operative Intersections:*

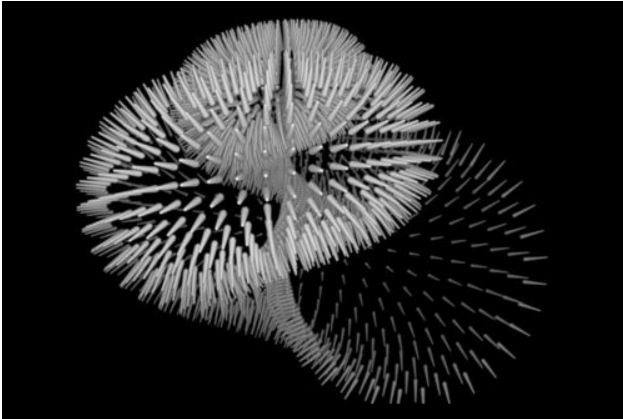
Between Site-Specific Drawing and Spatial Digital Diagramming, LAP – Lambert Academic Publishing, 2010.

- [6] – Fratzeskou, Eugenia, "Chora Platonica & Digital Matrix", *Digimag*, No. 55, June 2010, <http://www.digicult.it/digimag/article.asp?id=1823>, Fratzeskou, Eugenia, *New Types of Drawing in Fine Art: The Role of Fluidity in the Creation Process*, LAP – Lambert Academic Publishing, 2010 and Fratzeskou, Eugenia, *Operative Intersections: Between Site-Specific Drawing and Spatial Digital Diagramming*, LAP – Lambert Academic Publishing, 2010.
- [7] – Fratzeskou, Eugenia, "[Tracing' Infra-spaces: Complicated Beginnings & Elliptical Ends](#) [Part 2]", *Digimag* No. 61, February 2011, <http://www.digicult.it/digimag/article.asp?id=1985>.
- [8] – Rajchman, John, *Constructions, Writing Architecture Series* MIT Press, 1998, p.117.
- [9] – Eisenman, Peter, *Diagram diaries*, Thames & Hudson, London, 1999, p.34.
- [10] – Anthony Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely*, MIT Press, 1992, p.119 (see also pp. 118, 121).
- [11] – Ibid, pp.194-196. Manovich, Lev, *The Poetics of Augmented Space*, 2005,

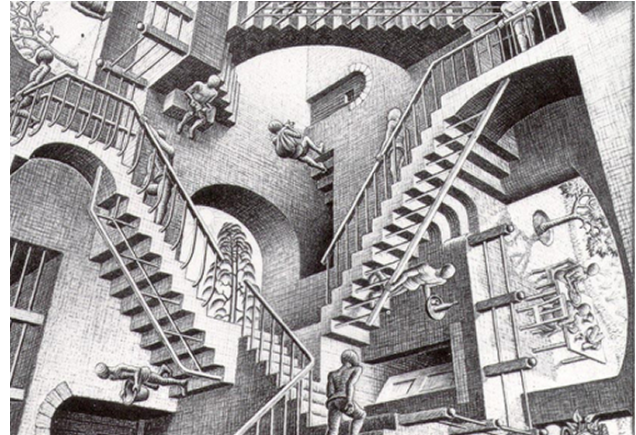
http://www.manovich.net/DOCS/Augmented_2005.doc, accessed:
17/9/2010.

Notes On Time And The Net. Morphogenesis Of An Ongoing Relationship

Mitra Azar



The purpose of this article is to introduce a series of reflections around a phenomenology of the Net in which the classical meaning of the most common categories of philosophical interpretation – time, space, subject, object, perception, image – definitely seems to creak. We chose to start from time, on the one hand, because of the value that this category has gained in the history of Western thought and, on the other, for the evidence of an ongoing morphogenesis in the way men experience it in the digital and computerized contemporary society. The issue around which we want to orbit is: what is the experience of time that the Internet offers us?



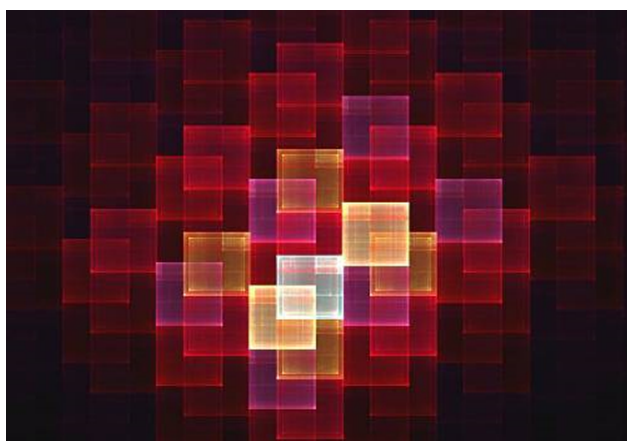
M.C. Escher - Relativity (1953), Extract

In Kant's assumption (*Critique of Pure Reason*), time (and space) is represented as an a priori category of experience, as conditions of the possibility of any sensory perception. According to Kant, the Aristotelian concept of time (cf. *Physics*) as a measurable order of movement, is formalized in a causal Newtonian order, based on the irreversibility of the time arrow.

From Einstein's relativity, the causal dimension of time begins to show its limits. Moreover, following the development of quantum physics, it becomes virtually impossible to conceive space and time as independent *a priori*, moment-b-moment decipherable categories of a biunivocal relationship

(cf. *Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle*).

We wonder whether it makes sense to apply a categorical and aprioristic conception of time to explain the concept of temporality in the Net. It certainly may seem weird to think about time in this ascetic mode, considering that, in the virtual world of the Internet, time has to be acted by an observer – or, better, an operator – rather than to *act*, to pre-exist. And not even causal mechanism seems able to describe this pragmatic temporal relationship between the user and the Internet, as it appears for example in our simultaneous attitude of reading multiple pages at the same time, symptomatic of how the causal sequentiality of time is quickly abdicating in favour of a random multi-layered synchronicity.



Walter Benjamin - L'opera d'arte nell'era della sua riproducibilità tecnica (1936)

Undoubtedly, these considerations move us towards a conception of time in which the presence of an

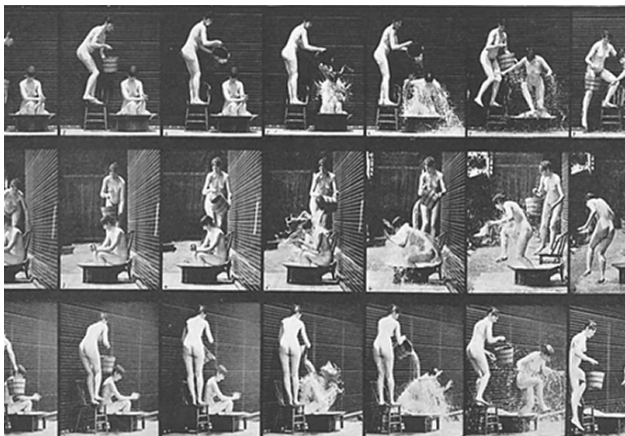
observer/participator takes greater significance. Henri Bergson's philosophy was the first to push systematically in this direction, breaking away from the mechanical, spatialized, immovable temporality of Einstein's science, and focusing on the concept of duration as perceived time, as all the moments (present, past and future) that are simultaneously present within conscience (cf. *La pensée et le mouvant*).

As already stated in St. Augustine, "Perhaps it might be said rightly that there are three times: a time present of things past; a time present of things present; and a time present of things future." (cf. *Confessions*) Those statements seem amazingly to refer to the fruition of time in the Net, where the increasingly shrinking of the time interval between the operator's action and the system's response, and the subsequent and further operator's reaction creates a short circuit in which times overlap, and simultaneity replaces chronology.

The user seems to internalize the simultaneous and multi-tasking time overimposed by the Internet, in a paradoxical circle in which the Net, on the other hand, seems to externalize several working mechanisms of the unconscious (e.g., simultaneity) and, in the meanwhile, to expose them to the conscious re-perception of the

operator in front of the screen.

In this sense, the Internet may be thought of as a distorting and in-progress mirror of the unconscious. That's why it makes sense to say that the unconscious is outside, liminal in fact, between man and machine, in the optical unconscious (cf. Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*), as well as in the act of a compulsive uploading of millions of filmed and photographed images in which our memory believes to externalize itself. Uploading then switches from being an act of possession and domination over reality (*Begriff*), to becoming an involuntary reflex that escapes the subject's conscious analysis, and shows the dual nature of the recorded, and subsequently uploaded images – both control tools and pockets of involuntary memory.



Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari - Mille Plateaux

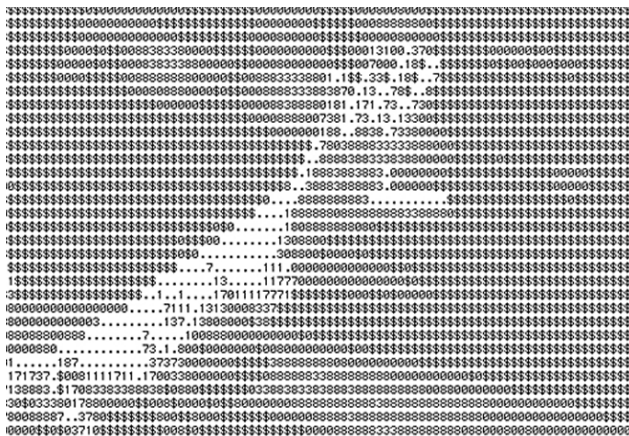
Thus, the time of the Net seems to resemble the unconscious time of dream, in which the metamorphosis of the perceptual states is in a perennial dehiscence. ~~The Missing Moment: biopolitics and the unconscious shapes a modern science~~ the missing moment (cf. Robert Pollack,

), defined as the interval between the perception in real-time and the 40 milliseconds required for its becoming conscious, is canceled.

It is perhaps in this frame that the deepest desire of contemporary *zoe* biopolitics is disclosed, a desire to economically colonize the moment, the purest moment of bare life (). That individual life preceding community which, conversely, just ~~through~~ the technologies of the moment, may be able to continually redefine itself ~~as the passive node~~ () of arachnoid, rhizomatic, n-1 microcommunities (cf. Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari,).

Net Art At Exhibition Centers. Marta Ponsa And The 'jeu De Paume' Case

Giulia Simi



Samuel Bianchini - All Over (2010) - Photographie Originale copyright All Mobarek

Even if we are convinced that we are living in a period of great artistic effervescence about the so-called new media, we are still used to think of Net Art [1] as something on the fringe of the big exhibition spaces.

The internet-based art takes with itself the dark shadow of processuality and immateriality, being it the last among the multimedia artistic practices and often an extension of that big analytical line which a large extent of last century artistic production went through. This last one in particular seems to be meeting resistance from museums and exhibition centres which are still very object-oriented, though the first pioneering curatorial experimentations in this direction date back to early '80s (just think of

the by famous exhibition "Les Immateriaux" by Jean-François Lyotard at the Pompidou Center in Paris in 1985) [2].

Slippery, elusive, uncontrollable, apparently incurable. How does net art exhibit itself? The question is open more than ever now and it is at the core of many debates [3], with the attempt to develop new fruition, exhibition, distribution models to try to overcome some technical and conceptual critical situations brought to surface by the Internet medium. In the meantime net art remains one of the less financed, supported, and exhibited artistic practices by museums and contemporary art centres at world level. With some rare and precious exceptions. One of which is for sure the Jeu de Paume in Paris, famous contemporary art Institution in the heart of the Tuileries, very close to the Louvre, that great archive of artworks-object.



Anonymous (2006)

The centre addresses mainly the “contemporary image” in all its expressions, from photography to cinema, and it opened in 2007 an Espace Virtuel for the production, exhibition and diffusion of net art artworks. In every year there are two or three exhibitions, and were exhibited the artworks by artists such as Les Trucs, Agnès de Cayeux, Samuel Bianchini, Angelo Plessas and Andreas Angelidakis, Christophe Bruno. The last one is now curator of the Identités Précaires collective up until 15 September 2011 presenting a selection of artists and artworks which dealt with the theme of identity instability through virtual spaces: among these Eva and Franco Mattes, Heath Bunting, Les Liens Invisibles, Luther Blisset, The Yes Man.

We have had the pleasure of interviewing Marta Ponsa, who is in charge of the artistic and cultural projects of Jeu de Paume, and she has been taking care of planning the virtual exhibition space since 2009.

Since she surely represents one of the most interesting voices to listen to on the relationship that digital art can develop with contemporary art institutions, we asked her some questions about the history and the activity of Espace Virtuel.

Giulia Simi: First of all, would you like to tell us when and how the idea of “espace virtuel” was born? From which instances, with which purposes?

Marta Ponsa: The idea of having a virtual space to present artistic projects was born quite naturally due to the fact of Jeu de Paume’s mission that is to present all kind of images. We are surrounded by an incredible number of different types of images. These images use diverse supports and devices to be showed nowadays. Since more traditional supports as photography, video, or cinema to the newest medias as computer interactive images or net projects, we want to offer to our audience the same diversity of images that they have in their daily life. To explore the news medias and to present projects reflecting on these issues is one of our main goals as an Institution.



Agnes de Cayeux - Alissa, discussion avec Miladus - Elon/20/21/501, 2010

Giulia Simi: How do you select the artists and works exhibited? Is there a link with the exhibitions in the physical space?

Marta Ponsa: *Espace Virtuel* was born in 2007. During the first two years, curators of the Satellite Program were selecting the artists and projects for this space. Satellite Program is an invitation to young curators to propose three exhibition projects of young artist to be presented in the interstitial “physical” spaces of Jeu de Paume rooms. In the first edition, Fabienne Fulchéri decided to invite two of the same artists of the physical space to the virtual space (Ultralab and Detanico 1 Lain).

For the second edition, Maria Inés Rodriguez invited other artists to present new projects (Christophe Bruno and Angelo Plessas in collaboration with Angelidakis). Since 2009, I have taken care of this program. For the third year I have decided to select French net artist

because I realize that they were not other places to present net art in France and they were less represented. Of course the net doesn’t have nationalities and states (sometimes unfortunately YES, i.e. firewall used by some countries) but I thought that it was a starting point. The second reason of my selection is that I wanted to reflect on the net itself and its power and that is why I have selected projects that present artistic strategies to point out how internet manipulate pieces of information nowadays.

All Over of Samuel Bianchini is an example of how economy is modelling images of information following its hide purposes. *Alissa en conversation* d’Agnès de Cayeux gave us the opportunity to talk with a “bot”, a robot, who was in conversation with cybernauts intelligently. The control and the surveillance of our movements was one of the subjects of *Les trucs* from the collective Microtruc.

Those projects, together with Christophe Bruno’s project currently exhibited, don’t have a direct link with physical exhibitions. However, Jeu de Paume’s program shows an obvious interest in contemporary society and its problematic issues. All our activities, cinema programs or exhibitions share that question.

In all those cases, Jeu de Paume was the producer of the works, that means that we participate economically in the work supporting net art.



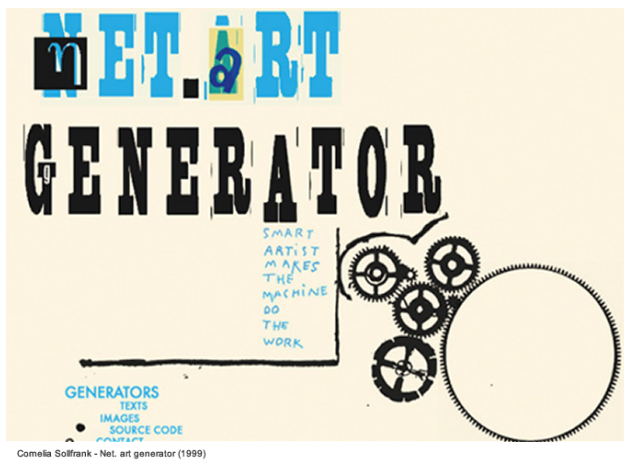
Marine Neddum aka Mouchette - Mouchette.org (1997)

Giulia Simi: Exhibiting internet-based works in an online space obviously eludes the “translation” issue that involves particularly the curating of new media art, not only the internet-based one. Virtual spaces for virtual works: perfect solution or the attempt to bypass an old problem?

Marta Ponsa: I understand your question of “translation” as a question of transposition. Virtual spaces are new topographies, new places to visit, to take up and to use as public spaces. I think this space is an opportunity for artists and curators to show projects and to share information and discussions. Why not? Unfortunately net space is neither universal nor democratic but Art Institutions aren’t either.

Giulia Simi: The “espace virtuel” is free and reachable from all over the world, recognizing in a certain way the traditional link between the medium Internet and the gratuitousness. This represents one of the critical issue in market development about new media art, together with the immateriality of the work. Do you think this is a sustainable practice for a longtime? Or maybe is this a period of adjustment before internet-based art develops other and specific models of fruition and distribution, maybe quite different from those ones of the art contemporary system? What do you think about that?

Marta Ponsa: It is a very difficult question. In fact it is the same problem had by other collectives that uses the net to show and to promote their work (music, videos). How artists, musicians etc can survive only thought an exchanges economy? The Internet system and artists should think about new distribution channels with paid specific contents? Or through the galleries or web sites? Or via the phone operators? The fact is that the majority of net artist live on teaching, designing or on other jobs for the moment. May be it is not so bad.

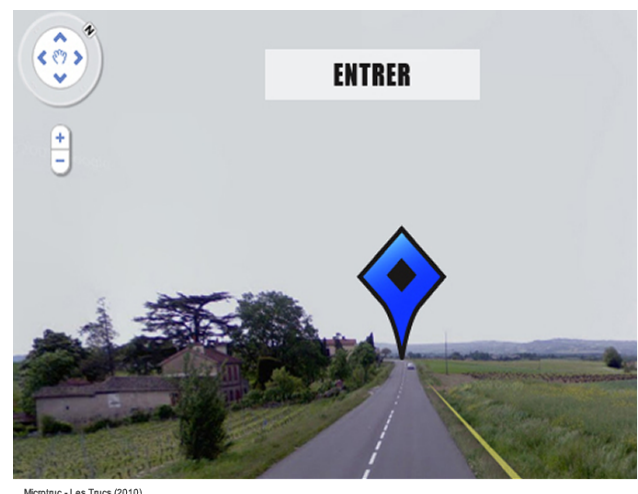


Giulia Simi: *Identités Précaires* is the current exhibition curated by the artist Christophe Bruno, who brings to light the hot topic about new codifications of identity at the age of late capitalism and “digital reproduction”. This is a collective show, where the “espace virtuel” acts as an aggregator, linking to artist websites where actually works are hosted. What would be the limits and difficulties in developing a real exhibition online platform, able to host different works to be browsed within a unique interface? Do you think that research of new online fruition models that is new interface and interaction models, could maybe represent one of the possible developments of curating art on the Internet?

Marta Ponsa: My answer to your first question is that in *Identités Précaires* group project we have tried to create a platform to show a group exhibition stressing the autonomy of each project. We have focused in

presenting the main subject and the different works without hierarchy. The theme is only a criteria of selection and every work is made by artists that Christophe follows and likes since long time ago. He has put together different ages and nationalities around a wide subject, the Identity in the web. Furthermore not every project is conceived as “artistic” work, that is a new and interest issue that opens the door to other ways of curating in a less institutionalised and classical way.

“Espace virtuel” as other new online exhibition spaces, can be thought as a platform to present projects coming not exclusively from the art world but sharing subjects and preoccupations with artistic works. It can be a more flexible place to show a community of gestures thinking about our contemporary society. That without forget artistic gestures, of course.



Notes:

[1] - For my convenience I use in a “non problematic way” the term net art, even if I am aware of the long terminology debate which characterizes art based on the internet medium. Cfr. referring to this V. Tanni in A. Balzola / A.M. Monteverdi, *Le arti multimediali digitali. Storia, tecniche, linguaggi, etiche ed estetiche delle arti del nuovo millennio*, Garzanti, Milano, 2004 and M.Deseriis / G. Marano, *Net. Art. L'arte delle connessioni*, Shake Edizioni, Milano, 2008

[2] - A monography on this exhibition was recently published. Francesca Gallo,

, Aracne, Roma, 2008

[3] - Cfr. The recent book by Christiane Paul,

, Paperback, 2008

<http://www.jeudepaume.org/>

<http://espacevirtuel.jeudepaume.org/>

<http://espacevirtuel.jeudepaume.org/identites-precaires-630/>

*Les immatériaux. Un parcours di
Jean-François Lyotard nell'arte
contemporanea*

*New Media in the
White Cube and Beyond*

Fidel Garcia's Work. Art As A Complex System

Lucrezia Cippitelli



Fidel Garcia - Bomba Logica (2008)

“Ser artista implica trabajar dia y noche: no todos asumen esta responsabilidad” (To be an artist means to work day and night: but not everybody accepts this burden). It is 2005, we are in a badly refrigerated room of a Centro Habana’s apartment.

Fidel Garcia (at that time he was still known with his Micro X nickname, by the name of the homonym precinct of the Alamar quarter where he still lives now) has paid me a visit to talk about his work. At that time he was an ISA student (Instituto Superior de Arte, maybe the best school of art in all Latin America) and made part of Tania Bruguera’s Catedra Arte de Conducta, the educational project the Cuban artist carried on for almost a decade, by bringing artists, philosophers, activists and curators to Cuba in order to educate and raise a new generation

of artists, grown up in the shade of the international panorama of our time.

Fidel was then an artist that few in his country could comprehend. He was introduced to me by other artists: he was helping them rearranging their audiovisual documentation archive. He had spent a whole night at video editing, sitting in front of an old Mac in Tania’s studio, made available for the students of the Catedra. At that time to import computers in the island without permission was still forbidden, as well as to buy some without publicly recognized institutional reasons. A Mac was a unique good and Fidel was one of the few in town who could ever use it and produce something creative with it. After that meeting, I had known Fidel was a genius at using every kind of technology.



Fidel Garcia - C.G.A.F.T. 30 I.R.T.

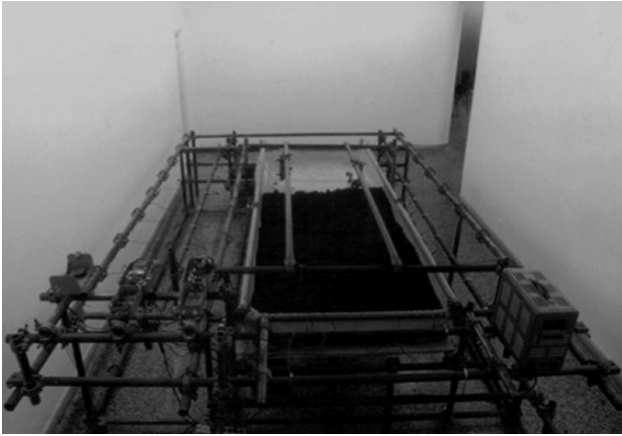
And above all, he was also the author of strange projects. He had become a radio amateur in order to enter the *T.E.P.S. radiophonic network* (*Territorio Extendido por Propagación de Sonido*, 2004); he had raised a community of earthworms that were self reproducing by eating earth in the basement of ISA and turning into a self-sustainable system (*Micro X. T3. 0, 67 m3*, 2004); he had made a mysterious performance in Alamar where he was lying on his stomach, in the middle of a street in a populated quarter, sucking water from a puddle with a drinking straw (*HAT 2 - Humano Activado por el Territorio*, 2005).

At the 2006 Havana Biennial I met him again in Tania's Studio, during a parallel event (yet most interesting than many things you would see in museums or galleries). It was the presentation of the works of Catedra's young artists, attended by many international curators and critics. During his presentation, Micro X

defined his work beginning with an objective description of his projects, ignoring all theoretical/critical reasons that pushed him to create them. It seemed a list of complex and obscure operations through and through.

Realization of a mobile radiophonic emission in the streets of his quarter; insertion in the national telephonic web; creation of prototypes capable of intercepting radio waves in the air and turning them into sound and so on. In response to these detailed descriptions, Spanish critic Jose Luis Brea had objected: "I can't understand why you are talking about this. What's the point?". All the non Cuban critics nodded to that comment, for they could find neither a link nor an aesthetical reason for those operations.

The Cuban critics instead, who were really fascinated by his presentation, had revolted against Brea's comments by shouting: "in a country where everything is public, where all systems are dominated by the institutions and all communications are always under control, to act as a bug in any mechanism has a meaning much greater than anyone outside Cuba could ever imagine".



Fidel Garcia - Micro X (2000)

Fidel Garcia is one of the most visionary artists of Cuba's last generations. His experimentations with old and new technologies operate conceptually in public, social spaces and every kind of system. He believes art is a platform where to create public events: the public spaces of a town, a public building, the air, the telephonic networks and society in general. These events are none other than "simulation of the real", as claimed by himself, and are deep-rooted in a systemic analysis of the specific contexts the actions are aimed to and in their deconstruction of the carrying structure.

That is why Fidel Garcia speaks of himself as an activist and anthropologist. The projects he realizes are always based on observation, analysis of the context (considered by him radically as "the system") and its structures, deconstruction of these structures in view of a direct intervention. Power and control are indeed the main core

of his work, acting like a virus injected into a system.

The output of his works often mixes old and new technologies, and expresses itself as the reconstruction of a new world with rules and life of its own, generated by the alteration of the normal functions of the previous system and, subsequently, by the public show of its mechanisms and bugs.

Wires, sound waves, tools emitting sound, computers, motors, chemical reactions, engineering structures are pure instruments in this sense. They are tools used in order to demonstrate axioms and not functional to the construction of an aesthetical object or useful to the aestheticization of a process. "Our generation grew up by technology - says Fidel in a long interview - I don't care about using the instruments of art. Art is now at the edge of its evolution. Working with information media connects you with the present, with what is happening now in the world. Here, indeed, it happens in a less diffused way, because of Cuba's situation (impossibility or difficulty to access the instruments)".



Fidel Garcia - State (2006)

“Don’t feel part of a core of artists who use technologies, especially at an international level. Many people use technology in the world, but very few of them use it as a medium. The greater part uses media and technologies as concept. In other words they process works in which the instruments used suggest their meaning as well. I prefer using technologies as pure medium. An information medium. The mechanism of the media I am using determines the meaning of my work.”

In other words, the analysis of the systems unveiling structures and mechanisms becomes the base on which to build other systems that are their functioning metaphor. “I intend to create a parallel reality. My works start from codified programming systems that were born out of reality but soon they build another one during their functioning. A parallel reality. The medium then becomes an effective tool to trespass in our everyday life. My work generate

“Trespassing systems”. It utilizes codes of common use that act as another language within the context of the newly born situation. And I am the only channel allowing to decode the meaning of such conveyed information”.

Fidel’s projects are heavily characterized by the almost total absence of human beings. Even when they are present (as in the case of *T.E.P.S. radio amateurs*), they are functioning part of the system, as any other machine, computer or tool summoned by the artist. The work is meant for the public spaces but it does not count any immediate interaction with other individuals.



Fidel Garcia - T-error (2006)

“I work in the public spaces but not under a human point of view – Fidel continues. I focus on the human influence on the territory. I work in favor of the territory. I consider it an independent space. Such a nonsense if we think about our everyday reality, where the territory is pretty inert. I

see human beings as a system of cells, an organization housing information. Then if I use a human being in order to make a performance I use him as a organization conveying information, not for his own body.

The same applies to the territory: an information archive, a memory bank to penetrate and to work with. And I work with each memory bank of every territory, which provides me with different information. My role is then to channel information, depending on the territory I am operating in. Each work brings different information depending on the territory they were conceived”.

Fidel’s work grew during the years. He has lived in Denmark, at the Rijksacademie in Amsterdam and has become professor at ISA, the same school where he grew up artistically and still many Cuban artists of the previous generations teach. Among them, René Francisco, who made a creative process out of his educational practice with his Pragmatics, collective groups of artistic production where the professor disappears and becomes part of the collectivity.

ISA is one of its kind. Art students from all around the world come here only after a difficult test and improve their artistic practice on a creative and theoretical base. The students’ works

are not classified by discipline, genre or used media, but first of all by a clearly theoretical and conceptually complex context.



Fidel Garcia - 10_G_C02110.2006

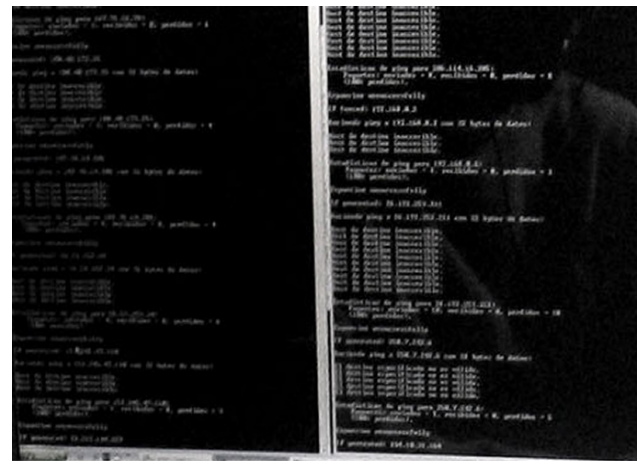
The artist’s education in this context has no doubt influenced his practice, founded on a conceptual complexity he showed in the work with every means necessary.

One of his works, *28 % / Software 28 %* of 2008, has been defined as a “cybernetic tool with the power to alter the ideological system”. It shows how ideologies work in (social) systems and decode them as prescindible, not obligated procedures one can always find a way out. The icon through which this analysis develop is lobotomy, “neurosurgical therapy invented for treating individuals whose behaviors are beyond control”.

The installation utilizes the concept of lobotomy as the metaphor of information deleting in a complex

system: an installed software deletes 28% of the information contained in a computer. “I see ideology as a mental conditioning, a law enacted by a mechanism of control based on striking fear for other ideological alternatives” Fidel concludes about this work.

STATE (2006) instead consists in the creation of an information virus by the same name. The virus has four features, metaphors of what Fidel calls “real state”: capability to export, capability to import, capability to accumulate and capability of change or mutate. The software bases its functioning on learning from its mistakes. For example, it identifies needs, dependences and subordinations of the system it is installed to.



Fidel Garcia - 10_G_C02110.2006

starts from a newly acquired intelligence: it evolves, develops, learns and once entering a computer it installs its four functions, taking possession of the contents of the host.

Therefore, art is for Fidel a platform of symbolic systems, images of social reality.

STATE

Francesca Grilli. Searching For The Daily Miracle

Alessandra Saviotti



Francesca Grilli - La Terza Conversazione (2010) - Performance

Francesca Grilli, who was born in Bologna and now lives in the Netherlands, has developed her research on the human figure realizing works inspired by her personal memories which are linked to her family and her daily life. Her work recently focused on the obsessive search for the daily miracle, through the manipulation of reality and adding an unexpected variable that produces a sense of familiarity that can also be shocking. As she herself explains, “the daily miracle is a minimal invisible action which often transforms reality into magic, daily actions and tasks into something fabulous.”

The language she has used predominantly in recent years is performance; her performances are accompanied by a profound study of

technology that becomes itself part of her work even if it does not create anything new; as in “Moth” where the Rubens tube is used; an albino singer activates it and it turns itself from a simple scientific experiment into something almost esoteric.

Technology plays a fundamental role in the series of photographs which compose “effluvia” where, thanks to a special Polaroid camera, Grilli is able to capture the magnetic field given off by people.

The Conversation

, the last project she submitted to the Mambo Museum in Bologna and with which she won the new art prize, promotes interaction between art and technology: in it she develops this concept through the use of everyday technology that already exists as an audio system being used in innovative ways. The case is placed horizontally, not vertically, for the performer to detect the vibrations with his feet. She did not make up anything but the performance really is something new.



Francesca Grilli - The Conversation (2010) - Performance

i

Alessandra Salviotti: Let's start from the beginning: You started your career as a photographer, didn't you? What happened then?

Francesca Grilli: I studied at the ISIA in Urbino a school focused on graphic design and photography and what interested me the most was to develop photograph investigating precisely the aspect of traditional techniques also working a lot manually. Then I moved to Milan, where I attended a more theoretical course which was related to contemporary art; there I started working with an artist, Alessandra Caccia, another photographer. From 2001 to 2004 we worked together, our name was *Caccia Grilli*, and together we began to explore video. The changeover from photography to video was fairly straightforward. Then in 2006 the International PerformanceTender curated by Fabio Cavallucci was announced and I

decided to participate.

Alessandra Salviotti: How did you get to performance?

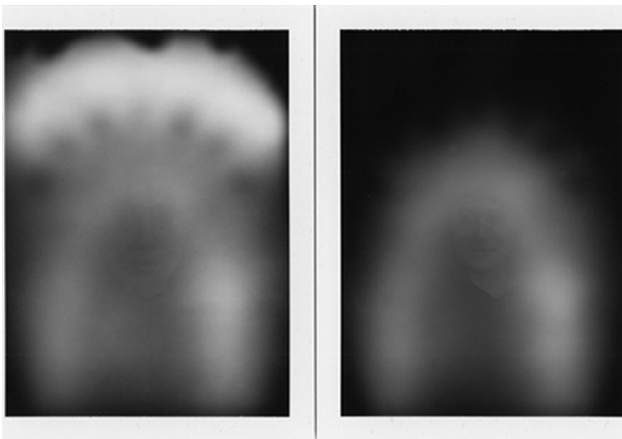
Francesca Grilli: The shift to performance is linked to a personal fact of my life: a few months before my grandmother passed away and I decided to spend some holidays with my grandfather. During that summer I got into his world, I accompanied him to the dance halls in Emilia he usually frequented. Then together with the prize, I started wishing to realize a performance: *Arriverà e ci coglierà di sorpresa* was my first performance.

This work went well, people were interested in it so, I then realized many other performances. I believe the transition from photography to performance is easy: I re-create moving images, still frames.

Alessandra Salviotti: Many artists working with performance are the protagonists of their performance. You are not.

Francesca Grilli: Paradoxically, I am present in my videos as a physical presence, but not in my performances. Perhaps because these actions derive from images that come to mind or I bump into in my daily life. Because I am fascinated by the life of other people I do not think my physical presence is necessary; having

thought and imagined that particular action means I am part of it, the performance becomes a sort of projection onto the others. This does not mean that I am not present; for example in *Enduring Midnight*, a performance I dedicated to my grandmother, I am present as a simulacrum. The performance was called after an opera; in it an opera singer sings at night: in fact I sing for her. There is another person with some very specific physical particularities that I do not have who represents me.



Francesca Grilli - Effluvia (2010) - Polaroid

Alessandra Salviotti: The search for the daily miracle: I noticed your meticulous attention to detail that is presented to the eyes of the viewers as well as real actions; in fact your aim is to underline the illusion that occurs before the eyes of the viewers.

Francesca Grilli: Have you ever noticed scenes in a sense apocalyptic in their banality, or combinations of special characters, or objects and

actions that move you so much walking down the street? In my opinion this is the definition of daily miracle: little things that amaze us. Truth at the same time is very important and in fact the only real illusion I've ever used in my performances is in "effluvia" where there is a chair that levitates. Had I found a fakir levitating I would have invited him to my performance. The physical effort and skill that the performer has to make in carrying out the action must be relevant and with some risk, although not revealed. Facing risk gives value to the action.

Alessandra Salviotti: Your work with the deaf community began as a "cycle". What inspired you?

Francesca Grilli: I was inspired by a scene from "Babel" the movie by Alejandro González Iñárritu where a deaf Japanese teenager is in a disco where some techno music is being played very loud. Suddenly the director chooses to turn down the volume of the music in order to show how the same situation is perceived by her. She is also under the influence of drugs and the director shows in her all the clichés of adolescents in a disco, but she does not hear a sound and she lies to everybody because she dances. At one point in the same scene she comes closer to one of the audio boxes and she touches it in order to understand what is really

happening; for me this is a moment of great intimacy. So because of this scene I got interested in the music theme and in deafness.

At first I tried to find some deaf musicians, I was interested in people producing sounds without hearing them, but I did not want any sense of pity. Then I met Alfonso Marrazzo, a deaf student of music who directed me to another way of “listening” through vibration. He introduced me to Nicola della Maggiora who then became my performer. He was 14 years old at the time and he embodied all the elements that interested me. From here the trilogy started.



Francoesa Grilli - La Quarta Conversazione (2008) - Video

Alessandra Salviotti: What does the trilogy include?

Francesca Grilli: *La Terza Conversazione* is the first work. In it, Nicola stood on a wooden structure

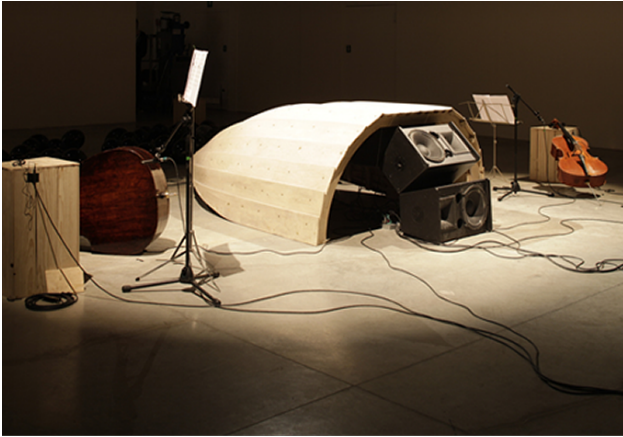
that contained the audio box and he played 7 minutes of techno music in the Italian sign language. The same year I developed a site specific performance for the festival Drodesera, which financed the entire cycle of works, which consisted of a choir of deaf people singing in the woods at dusk. The audience reached the place where the choir was after 20 minutes walking up the mountain; the choir sang quietly.

The following year I shot a film in 16 mm called *La Quarta Conversazione* in which I invited a group of teachers of deaf children to sing a lullaby. Usually these songs only have a sound aspect because listeners fall asleep; in this case, only the visual aspect is underlined because it is sung with hands. I was interested in the aspect of an impossible communication. *The Conversation* is the last work of the cycle. It ends it.

Alessandra Salviotti: Regarding *The Conversation* the installation is magnificent. What do you think about this aspect taking into consideration that you never leave any record of your performances?

Francesca Grilli: This work includes a sculptural part of it which has to stay and live by itself full of the memory of the performance. For me it is a real

sculpture. I never present any video documentation as a work; I use it in order to show what happened. On the contrary, the photographs are accompanied by the audio of the performance; they help in understanding the performance.



Francesca Grilli - The Conversation (2010) - Performance

Alessandra Salviotti: What are your references related to art history?

Francesca Grilli: The Pre-Raphaelites and the Romantics, of course Dadaism, but in particular I refer to the film industry.

by Peter Weir in 1976, which I saw when I was very small, influenced my whole life; also Maya Deren and her symbolism linked to the ritual, the experiments of mesmerism and the spiritualists of the end of the 1800s.

Picnic at Hanging

Rock

Multisensory Space. Interview With Sonia Cillari

Barbara Sansone



Sensitive to Pleasure Interactive performance - Performative electric field sensing, electric pulses interface and ambisonics sound environment (duration: 2h), 2010 - Electric pulses interface.

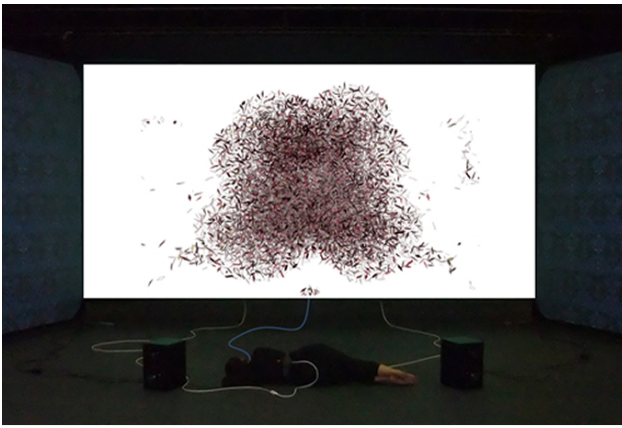
They are talking very much about her recently and her works are much requested in every new media art centres all around the world. We saw her at last year's Ars Electronica in Linz, where her performance *As an artist, I need to rest*

(http://www.soniacillari.net/As_an_artist_I_need_to_rest.htm) has been practically unanimously considered one of the most interesting proposals of all the variegated and famous festival.

A few months ago she won the first prize in Vida 13.0 Fundaciòn Telefònica competition, with her project *Sensitive to Pleasure* (http://www.soniacillari.net/Sensitive_to_Pleasure.htm). This just to mention her most recent successes and leaving

out, for a moment, the residenz series , and in the past years, at institutes the likes of V2_, Institute for the Unstable Media (2004), Rijksakademie van beeldende kunsten (2004-2005), STEIM: Studio for Electro-Instrumental Music (2006 and 2010), Netherlands Media Art Institute/NIMK (2006 and 2010), [ars]numerica (2009) and Claudio Buziol Foundation (2010).

We are obviously talking about Sonia Cillari, original artist carrying on by long time a personal and coherent project, by offering to the public a way to enter, feel and live her work with body and soul. Awarded with a Honorable Mention at 2007 Prix Ars Electronica, Interactive Art, she is today a professor at Frank Mohr Institute, IME Interactive Media Environment Department, and she is part of Optofonica Laboratory for Immersive ArtScience based in Amsterdam.



Sonia Cillari - As an artist, I need to rest. Generative / Interactive performance (duration: 1h 30min.) 2009-2010 - Feather resistance patterns (level 2 purple: 15 min)

Silvia Scaravaggi had already interviewed her

(

<http://www.digicult.it/digimag/article.asp?id=882>) for Digicult in 2007, but the interesting evolution of this artist, capable of cutting more and more short the distance between work and public, forced us to pay her another visit. During her path, ranging from architecture to media art, from Italy (where she was born) to Amsterdam (where she lives), Sonia shows us how space and body are two interfaces acting on one another, through the language of perception and sensation.

Barbara Sansone: Naples, Rome, Paris, Barcelona, Amsterdam: such are the five principal steps of your educational path. Not to mention the various phases of your artistic career, that brought you and keep on bringing you in different parts of the world. Do you think this sort of nomadism, now typical of new art, is fundamental to make an artist grow?

Has it a more particular meaning in a path like yours, where space plays a really key role?

Sonia Cillari: Luckily I am curious and this helped me in the choice of my educational path. I do not think nomadism is fundamental for an artist's growth, but no doubt it encourages a certain "attitude to live". Moreover, it contributes to foster an expressive creativity, necessary when facing the different conditions of a new artistic and social environment.

As far as I'm concerned, to travel a lot and especially to expose my works in different countries excites me, mostly for the questions that arise on the topic my works involve. The reaction of the public is indeed a fundamental part of my research and so when the comparison is different I feel enriched by that. When I can, I try and live in beautiful cities. For example, in the last few years, for work or personal choices, I have often spent time in wonderful Venice.



Sonia Cillari - Sensitive to Pleasure. Interactive performance - Performative electric field sensing, electric pulses interface and ambisonics sound environment (duration: 2h). 2010

Barbara Sansone: What are the kind of problems encountered by your works during conception, realization and distribution?

Sonia Cillari: My works require a sometimes longer than expected period of research and experimentation and this can lead to problems. Experimentation is no doubt the most important step of the realization process and so, in any case, any effort I am forced to make is paid-off. As for the distribution of my works, in the last few years one aspect in particular has become more and more concrete. The fact that my most recent works are conceived as performative events having a more or less defined duration (and at the same time they imply a permanent use of their exposition space) sometimes makes it difficult to put them into an exposition schedule.

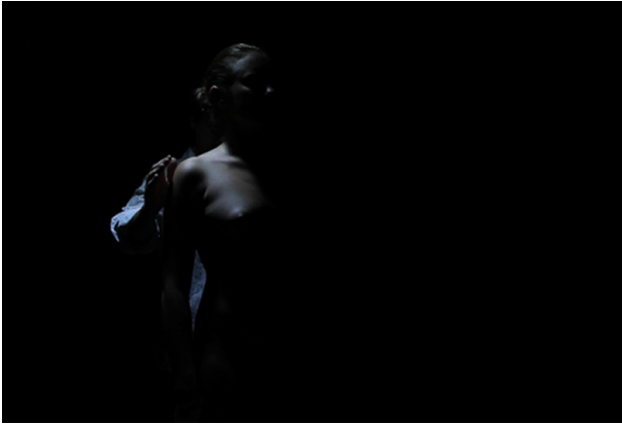
Besides, it seems to me that the artistic expression form we can call as interactive or participative performance has not been fully understood yet. We are still much tied with tradition, that once imposed a clear distinction between active artist and passive public. Nowadays then the borders between activity and passivity are still very difficult to comprehend. My works require the public to full concentrate in order to perceive its spatial experience.

Barbara Sansone: Did you ever ask yourself how you works in the future will be? Did you forecast a form of preservation so that they could live through time, despite the rapid change of technologies?

Sonia Cillari: Among the competent institutions, an active debate concerning the forms of preservation of works using technologies is in course. Right now it seems very difficult to keep them alive in a distant future. I am not personally interested in the preservation of my works, and rather I accept they are not eternal. Yet I think it is very important to gather as much information as possible on the concept and research process, so that we can comprehending them better in the future.

Barbara Sansone: You stated your starting point is not the technological research and so you are often forced to create the necessary devices for your works. Nonetheless, one is naturally led to wonder: can sometimes the new technologies at your disposal suggest new ideas, if not in the concept, at least in the form?

Sonia Cillari: No, they can't. The idea of a work and the desire to realize it in its social and experience aspects are the only factors that push me to create a new one.



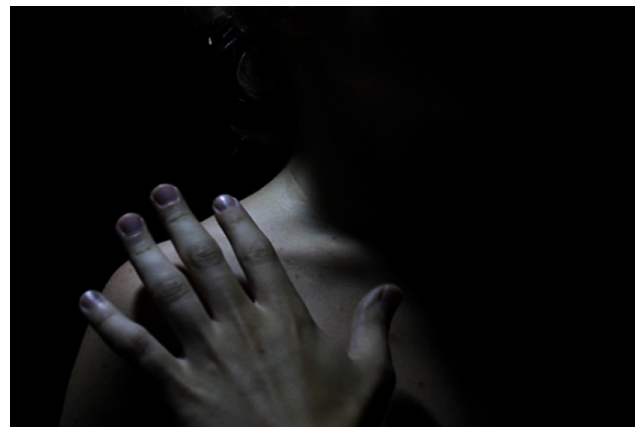
Sonia Cillari - Sensitive to Pleasure. Interactive performance - Performative electric field sensing, electric pulses interface and ambisonics sound environment (duration: 2h). 2010. Ambisonics cube

Barbara Sansone: Your works are a perfect balance of elements of different nature, performance and sound included. How does the creative process of all these ingredients work? Do you rely on experienced collaborators in every field? Have they a creative role or are they mere performers of an a priori vision of yours?

Sonia Cillari: I can tell you the idea born out already complete. In general, the process starts with the identification of the aspect to be investigated and the subsequent choice of a strategy to do that. Afterwards, by means of the preparation of a methodology, the innovative aspects requiring a wider experimentation can be located. The performative aspect is then fundamental in the last part of the process, for in order to experiment it accurately all the integral parts of the work become necessary.

In the first phase of the process I

choose a team of specialized collaborators, depending on the parts to be investigated and/or realized. My collaborators enter a pretty defined methodology of work, varying on the base of the results to be integrated. Their creative contribution is limited to their specialization field and must always satisfy the needs on the starting idea. Our relation has a constant feedback. Instead, the musicians and composers I collaborate with enjoy a wider expressive autonomy, particularly towards the aesthetics of the sounds to be used.



Sonia Cillari - Sensitive to Pleasure. Interactive performance - Performative electric field sensing, electric pulses interface and ambisonics sound environment (duration: 2h). 2010. Ambisonics cube

Barbara Sansone: A clear path can be followed in your work. It guided you more and more from the geometrical forms to the softest forms of body, from the surrounding spaces to the ones inside us, from the screen to the real space, from the interaction with the environment to the sensation of physic touch. What did bring you to this evolution?

Sonia Cillari: I studied as an architect and in time I chose the electronic arts and scientific research field, in order to explore no longer how to realize space, but how we human beings make experience of space.

In the last few years, tired of forging objects or interfaces allowing me to manipulate digital environments in order to investigate their spatial characteristics, I focused on a field of research that sees body as an interface, concentrating on bio-electricity and bio-magnetism. I was mostly interested in the human ways of perception of the physical space and in the mapping of the interior and exterior worlds we perceive through our senses. Then my interest for the interaction systems that put us into relation with the others broke in.

Since our process of conscience of reality become true through the information discovered with our senses, it is necessary for new spatial behaviours, complex levels of dynamics and physical interactions between us and the environment to emerge. The inhumanity of the contemporary experience can be intended as consequence of a negligence of our body and its senses and as a failure of our senses, only in favour of what we can see through our eyes. To the purpose of expanding our spatial experience we need to experiment immersive multisensory

environments. The objective of performative spaces is just to activate evolution systems where a more refined perception is possible.

Barbara Sansone: The performative phase of your works, as the two most recent ones testify (*As an artist, I need to rest e Sensitive to Pleasure*), is often very tough, if not even painful. And not surprisingly...

Sonia Cillari: These works are realized on the performative aspect through time, that reflects on me and my public. As an artist, I mean to gradually enter a state where to push my body and mind over the top, because i think performance is a very important means of artistic research.



Sonia Cillari - Sensitive to Pleasure. Interactive performance - Performative electric field sensing, electric pulses interface and ambisonics sound environment (duration: 2h). 2010. Electric pulses interface.

Barbara Sansone: Up to now, in your performances the public's pleasure means a pain for you. What does this relation mean? In the future do you intend to involve public more and more in not necessarily pleasant physical experiences?

Sonia Cillari: I intend to provide the public with a possible voyeuristic condition through which to take its time to analyze the work. I intend to draw it with me in the slow but increasing escalation of the performative event. The sufferance aspect then requires the public to put itself to the test and make a personal choice: whether accepting the experience or not. Not every performance of mine means physical effort. That is not a key element in my work, but it becomes integral part only when it is necessary to create an experience.

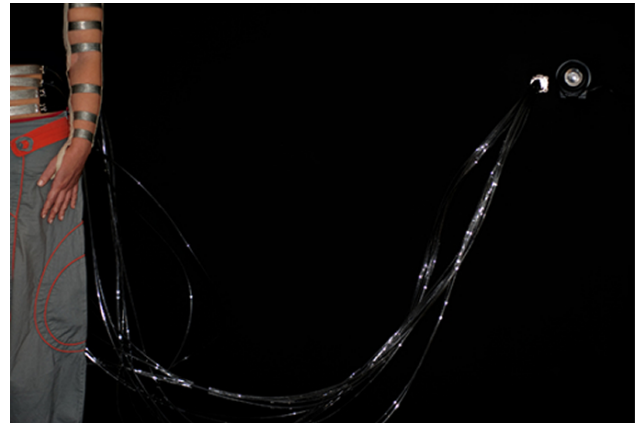
Barbara Sansone: Did you solve your “frustration due to the sensation of feeling yourself unconnected to your work” (as written on Vida’s site in the description of *Sensitive to Pleasure*)?

Sonia Cillari: To solve a frustration is never easy. Nonetheless, the *Sensitive to Pleasure* experience made me understand very much about me, my work and how it is perceived by others. It is a very controversial work that proved to me that there is a thin line in the fruition of a work and it can be balanced or not.

Barbara Sansone: What does it determine your performances’ duration?

Sonia Cillari: The extreme limit body can reach. Obviously this aspect

changes depending on environmental and physical conditions.



Sonia Cillari - Sensitive to Pleasure. Interactive performance - Performative electric field sensing, electric pulses interface and ambisonics sound environment (duration: 2h). 2010. Electric pulses interface.

Barbara Sansone: The interaction you offer to the spectators is often a very close experience, totally different from the passive fruition many artistic works still force them to attend to. No doubt this research (not only an interaction oriented one, but also the research of an innovative form where it really makes sense) is key in your work. But more generally speaking, if you were in the spectators’ shoes facing artistic works by various artists and different genres, would you consider participation as essential to the quality of fruition?

Sonia Cillari: This is really a key aspect for me. The spectator is often considered as a detached observer, deprived of a solid relation with his “surroundings”, above all through the suppression of the “other senses”. We need to activate and refine our perception as well as our spatial experiences. These are the

experiences determining how things exist for us and how we experience the huge non-void surrounding us, where we are immersed with our body, feeling emotions.

Barbara Sansone: What does feed you? As spectator, what kind of art do you like? What do you like to read? What do you like to listen? What are the artists (or non-artists) you draw your inspiration from most?

Sonia Cillari: I read books and contemporary art reviews and I am very critical about electronic art ones, for which a valid theoretical support practically does not exist, but only archives of works do. While I am working, I often listen to Bach or radios discussing social topics. I relax by taking a long walk and I am really fascinated by auteur cinema. I try and find in myself and in my desires the cues for my works. Privacy is necessary to the success of an idea. .

Barbara Sansone: Do you already have in mind a new project? Or are you working on a new one? Would you please tell us something in advance?

Sonia Cillari: I do have an idea I would like to make a project out of, but it is not finished yet. Better not to spread too much...



Sonia Cillari - Al Kourma - The complete Italian female.
Kitchen chemistry performance / Edible cream glosses, 2009



Barbara Sansone: And how does Sonia Cillari live? What does she do in her leisure time (provided she has some)?

Sonia Cillari: I have never been good at taking care of me. I dedicate the greater part of my time to work and travels, which are a direct consequence to it. I love to stay alone. But I obviously meet regularly someone new and this enriches me a lot. Moreover, in Amsterdam, with my dearest friends, I run Optofonica Lab, an artistic and scientific research laboratory. This gives me the opportunity to conciliate friendship and work.

Sitography:

<http://www.soniacillari.net>

<http://www.optofonica.com/>

Videography:

Sensitive to pleasure:

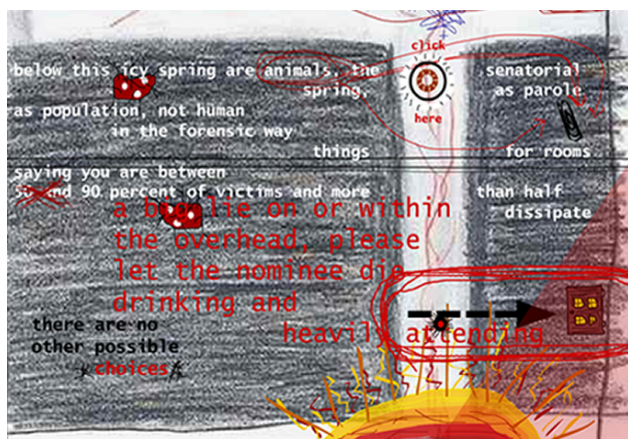
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r3u3QGMwEXk>

Sensitive to pleasure - Process:

<http://vimeo.com/14253730>

Aim, Fire, Poetry! Jason Nelson And The New Literature

Mathias Jansson



Jason Nelson - Game, Game, Game and again Game

On the screen I can see some soldiers who are debarking a vessel; they are wading ashore between wooden barriers during constant gunfire. A voice is mimicking the sounds from gun shots and explosions. What I am looking at is a one minute video created by Carlos González Tardón (b. 1982), a Spanish researcher focused on immersion in video games, artificial intelligence and robotics.

The video is a *machinima* (you can watch at here:

<http://www.vimeo.com/4835713>), a video recorded with help of a videogame. In this case, one of the countless commercial war games you could find in every game shop. The *machinima* was first presented at the E-Poetry Festival 2009 in Barcelona and the voice we hear is reciting the

poem *Schtzngrmm* by the Austrian poet Ernst Jandls (1925-2000).

The poem's title *Schtzngrmm* is a play with the German word "Schützengraben", which describes the trenches of the World War I. In the poem, Jandls describes the war by mimicking the sounds of gunfires and detonating missiles. Jandls was inspired by the Dada movement and Mary Ellen Scott describes his work in the book *Concrete Poetry: A World View* (1968, Indiana University Press) as: "Jandl's traditional background enabled him to try 'to combine old and new elements' in his experimental poems".

In Tardón's video, we can also find this combination; the combination of the new virtual warfare from videogames and Jandls "old" sound-poem from 1966 in a new exciting presentation.

poetry videogames. He has made a trilogy with name as: *Game, Game, Game And Again Game, I made this. You play this. We are Enemies* and *Evidence of everything exploding*. The videogame poems are based on traditional platforms games in which Nelson combines texts, pictures and sounds from the different sources from the Internet.



Myfawny Ashmore - Tic not a haiku

DigiMag got an interview with Jason Nelson about the inspirations and the ideas behind his breathtaking game poetry.

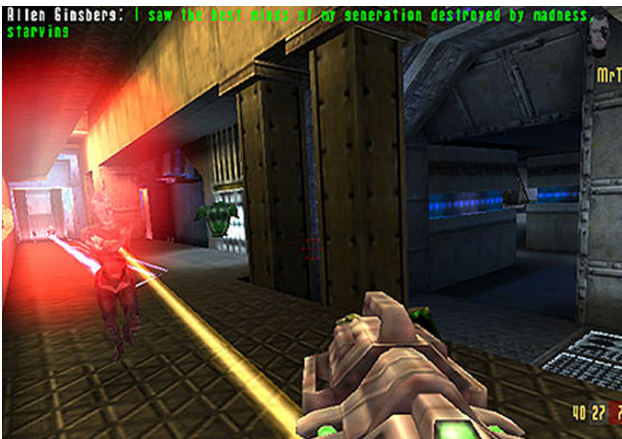
Mathias Jansson: What kind of videogames and poetry do you appreciate and inspire you as an artist?

Jason Nelson: Lately I've been fascinated by the strange stories built into cut scenes and introductory movies of 1980s Atari or Nintendo games. The contrast between the relatively simple game play/graphics

and the complex animated or image based storylines presented as rewards for defeating tentacled bosses. And while I doubt they were educated in the literary tradition, those who created early game narratives were pioneers. Their attempts to create small worlds and back-stories continue to be the inspiration for movies, games and novels thirty years later.

Additionally, those early games were often messy and dysfunctional with chaotic clashes of sounds and images. Without high powered graphics engines or developed AIs, the creators had to be creative within a limited framework. And so, I often scour the web for emulators and ROMs of any and all games systems. A project over the next year is to crack open ROMs for *Space Adventure* or *Cute Animal* platform games. Once inside I want to rewrite the rules or alter/disrupt the graphics. I imagine inserting acerbic poetic texts into Atari tennis games, or adding my own poorly filmed cut scenes into Sega *Pirate Queens*.

In a more modern vein, I'm always fascinated by how somewhat easy to use software, like Flash or GameMaker, is used to create an intimidating wide range of Indie games. Much of these would be considered outsider art.



Joseph Delappe - Elite Force voyager online

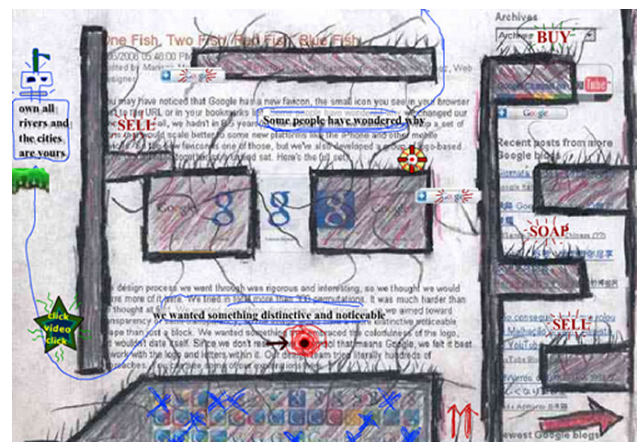
As for poetry, I continually find myself pulling/creating poems from found texts. 19th century engineering journals, old medical documents, strange maps, diagrams of computer systems, which are filled with contemporary poetry. The language of science is often riddled with poetic descriptions or curious stories. Additionally, I create poetry through generative means.

Sometimes I filter movies, radio talk shows, political speeches through speech-to-text software. And because most code that translates sound into words is buggy and inconsistent, or filled with bias and predefined notions of language, the outcome of the filtered are pages of nearly incoherently grammars and word couplings.

Often though, the textual relationships generated are beautiful and can be used to spark poetry within nearly all my creations. And of

course, I am a voracious reader and explorer, so any poetry, fiction, creative non-fiction I can find ends up inspiring me in some way.

Creating digital poetry is so multi-linear and dimensional, and contains such a variety of media and poetic intersections that inspiration must come from all directions. As soon as I begin to create a new work, five new works seem to spring from the original idea. Critics often suggest some of my works seem incomplete either in their construction or in meaning. And I would say incompleteness and messiness are part of the fabric of digital poetry.



Jason Nelson - I made this, you play this. We are enemies

Mathias Jansson: How do you think Internet, and new media as videogames, have changed and will change how we read and experience poetry in the future?

Jason Nelson: Video Games are a language, an architecture for relaying

ideas, for exploring some artistic / theoretical / poetic / educational / economic (and on and on) notions. The rise of relatively easy to code/create games unattached to profit/corporate directions, has meant game creators could use these architectures to communicate/build pretty and disturbing creatures. While I am overjoyed by the viral spreading my games have encountered, all my odd creations have accomplished is to slightly stretch how these frameworks could be used. Indeed, I am continually surprised by the creativity displayed in the independent gaming community.

And yet, I am equally shocked by how most big budget, platform specific works are, for the most part, uncreative and boring and over rely on fancy graphics. And even how we define “games” are constantly in revision. Maybe the term “game” no longer encapsulated what we create. If you can play/interact/solve/engage/rethink with an artwork, does that make it a game?

As for the future, interactive interfaces might not replace paper/static screen poetry. But, I am confident, interactive works will soon be a critical component of the literary landscape. The Internet, portable devices, game consoles, are the language of Digital Natives. Anyone

born after 1990 envision content as interactive and multimedia, and each year after only increases their tendency to visual, spatial and responsive thinking.

Indeed, I’ve already seen signs of a backlash towards interactive poetry, and important signs of its impending dominance. Exactly how the poetry manifests itself will depend on the gadgets and codes developed. But in ten years, poetry will be written with interfaces, images, sounds, movements, databases, interactivity, game components all as vital as poetic texts.



Jason Nelson - Between treacherous objects

Mathias Jansson: Can you tell me some about your trilogy of poetic art games: *Game, Game and Again Game* , *I made this. You play this. We are enemies* and *Evidence of everything exploding?*

Jason Nelson: Most seem them as a trilogy. But I actually view most of my

digital poetry creatures as game-like creations. Aside from the platform or top-down game engines, there is a slot-machine that predicts your death, generating a death scenario with each spin. I created a Zombie game, that while a failure in many ways does have the best title ever written (*Alarmingly these are not Lovesick Zombies*). Other works such as the within-within space of *Between Treacherous Objects*, the various cube creations, or the more fictional creations of *The Bomar Gene* or *Dreamaphage* or *Wittenoom*, all incorporate some game aspects.

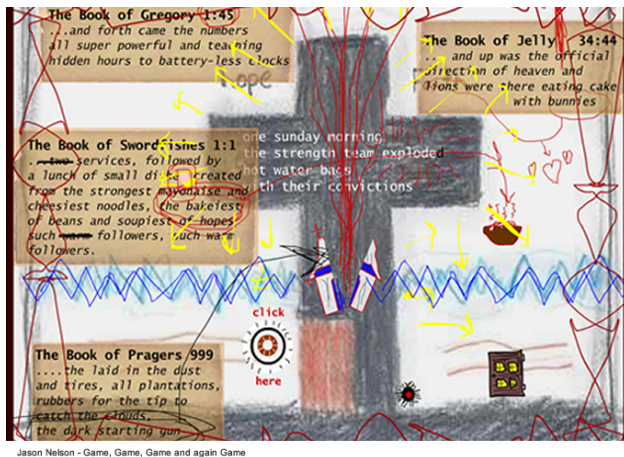
And one of my latest works, *Sydney's Siberia*, allows the user to infinitely explore a recombinatory mosaic of poetic tiles. It's a game of hide and seek with poetry that you can play forever. In addition, I've tried and failed with other game artworks, including a space shooter that takes 2 million minutes to play, or a soon to be released game that fills the screen with tombstones and short character bios of those killed during the game. So, while I understand why you might see a trilogy, I'm hoping it's more of a continually expanding experiment with interactive game-like poetic machines. And what is the difference between a machine and a creature?

Mathias Jansson: What about the game with the title *I made this, you play this, we are enemies?*

Jason Nelson: The title was a direct response to the thousands of emails/forum posts/blog entries about *Game, Game, Game And Again Game* that either loved it, or venomously hated it. That kind of polarized response, that strong visceral reaction is a great compliment to a creator, but at first the anger and aggression some expressed made me realize that combining two disparate art forms (poetry and games) meant I would ultimately make enemies in both camps. Some poets exclaimed my work wasn't truly literary and some game makers deemed by creations as easy-to-play artsy wankerism.

So, I created *I made this you play this we are enemies* using screenshots from many of the sites that promoted/lauded/lambasted my work. My idea was to mark-up or annotate the sites, to place a poetry game within net-based spaces, to combine sketchbook with commentary with absurd exploration. Although I am sure those addicted to the new-new of new media will cry out "same-same is lame-lame", I am planning to revisit the marked up screenshot poetry game platform. And instead of choosing popular sites, I'll be targeting relatively unknown portals, like the homepage for an Arboretum in Kansas or a small town museum in Vancouver, Canada or Toy Train collector's society, to bring

digital poetry to local fanaticism.



Mathias Jansson: Which role has the player/reader in your games, for example in *Game, game, game and again game?*

Jason Nelson: Even the simple left/right/up arrow movement of my poetry games allow the reader to take the role of hero. To mentally live, however briefly, within the screen. And to varying degrees, within all my creations the reader/player truly does become the writer. No, I am not giving them complete control, nor am I generating texts from their movements and/or responses/reactions. The creator's ideas/aesthetic is still strange attractor to all my digital creatures. It's almost as if I am offering them access to the back of my brain, letting them drive a lumbering hard to steer go-cart through poetic multimedia musings.

Mathias Jansson: *Evidence of*

everything exploding has a SF-story background about 10 important sheets of paper. Why these 10 papers and what are these levels representing in the game?

Jason Nelson: History, at least that history we study in school or experience through the media, is defined by seminal moments, is built from the evidence of seemingly important events. For *Evidence of everything exploding* I determined my own historical moments, signifiers of our contemporary condition. Perhaps it's best if I take you through all the levels, explaining, for the first time, who I chose the document for each.

One: the title page for an early etymological dictionary.

Understanding the origin of language, the inspirations for terminologies is critical for poetic exploration. And the level story is centered on how language is used for dominating culture.

Two: an early Dadaism poster. As you've noticed, my work is usually heavily tinged with the surreal. The Dadaist movement, I feel, is the most influential thought movement of the 20th century. We force logic on what are inherently Alien systems.

Three: the trajectory diagram for NASA's first Moon landing. An obvious choice, at least on a personal level. As

I am enamoured with space travel and amazed at both the skill needed to travel to our nearest satellite, and saddened that for over thirty years we have yet to return.

Four: The Bill Gates Letter to Hobbyists from the Computer Brew Club newsletter. There was a moment when software turned bad, when code became commodity, when a language became copyright. This letter represents that sad change, the beginning of charging for hello.

Five: A 1918 US Gov't Warning Letter concerning the Spanish Flu pandemic. After the virus seemed unstoppable, there were plans drafted to isolate a small healthy population for the survival of humanity. The result of a multi-million killing virus was for communities to avoid large congregations for the next forty years.



Jason Nelson - Evidence of everything exploded

Six: Copyright infringement notice to writer Neil Gaiman from the

producers of Attack of the Killer Tomatoes. Pure absurdity and a narrow victory for public commentary. What if linking to a website you criticize was illegal.

Seven: a page from James Joyce. His odd confluence of words and ideas and strange inspired me to write, and began to rip fiction from its rusting cage.

Eight: NYC Museum of Modern Art rejection letter to pre-famous Andy Warhol. It's funny how success and fame alter a critic/curator's judgement. Personality/perception as conceptual underpinning to marginally interesting art.

Nine: Letter from a very young Fidel Castro praising America and seeking money. Rarely are megalomaniacs driven by anything other than ego. Politics are a malleable investment portfolio and one of oddest long-standing conflicts could have been avoided by a ten dollar investment.

Ten (the last level): the patent for the Pizza Box. Simple, ubiquitous and genius. A cultural symbol that just might outlast all the Face/My/Twit/Googs of the world. We are packaging for the easiest of foods.

<http://www.secrettechnology.com/>

The Digital Gregor Samsa. Interview With Pierrick Sorin

Alexandra Purcaru



Pierrick Sorin - 22:13 - Photo by Alexandra Purcaru

Paris is proving increasingly active on the artistic innovations of the digital scene. New centers dedicated to Digital Arts have been flourishing in the last decade. The Cube was born in 2001 in Issy (<http://www.lecube.com>), the CentQuatre 104 was born in 2008 (<http://www.104.fr>), and the Gaîté Lyrique just opened in 2011 (<http://gaite-lyrique.net>). The three of them are platforms for creativity and avant-gardist sound, open to installations, exhibitions, performance, dance, rhythm and noise.

Pierrick Sorin, a multimedia artist which expresses himself through various means such as sound and video installations, presented the project entitled: *22:13 (this title is likely*

to be changed at any moment) at CentQuatre. The artist focuses his attention on short films, on the art of bricolage and storytelling through images and projections.

A varied audience filled the room, even occupying the staircase seats. It was an audience that appreciates the work at the border between installations, video, humor and poetry. The show was a melting pot of pictures, shooting, creativity, and derisive monologues of fictional characters that invites the viewer to enter an Art studio cluttered with screens, cameras, work tables, colors and masks ...

Pierrick Sorin made his debut in the eighties with short movies of himself shot in super-8. In many of his projects he is an actor, director and critic, but in *22:13* he finds in the actor Nicolas Sansieran alter ego in harmony with his creativity and his humor.



The protagonist moves frantically from one corner to another of his studio looking for a new idea. He uses a very sophisticated language, he rearranges his materials, he brushes in order to “clean the space from mistakes.” he moves only in his creative space, self filming, formulating questions to which he replies, proposing projects, refusing, postponing.

Nicolas Sansier is a sort of digital version of Gregor Samsa. He wakes up, he falls asleep, he reflects, he invites himself to dinner, he refuses, then he finds new ideas for his art projects, he takes notes... he leaves them in the end. We feel like we are in a trance, taken from this whirlwind of events self recorded and then projected simultaneously on multiple screens. In this way the image becomes the mean through which the artist transforms his daily rhythms in tragicomic chapters.

The show begins with Nicolas Sansier intent to clean the three RGB primary

colors on a glass plate. It is still unclear whether the protagonist is the real star of the show, whether he is the only protagonist. It is not clear either if we are actually on the stage or on the backstage.

We are involved by the pressing rhythm of its actions, by the only voice which enters the field and therefore we feel “we” are the public. What is interesting here is the style used by Pierrick Sorin – in fact he mixes various media, he depicts the artistic creation, he shares its image with the public. The spectator here is both the viewer and hearer of the creative process and its outcome.

Defining Pierrick Sorin’s work is a hard task, especially if we know his past passions. When he was a teenager he wanted to become a writer, before finding out that everything had already been written and so he surrendered to art; he enchanted by the video and then he condensed and spread its passions. Pierrick Sorin prefers to represent himself as an ardent self-employed, rather than as an artist.



Pierrick Sorin - 22h13 - Photo by Alexandra Purcaru

After the show, Pierrick Sorin has answered my questions about his performance and his work.

Alexandra Purcaru: What inspired this one-man-show? Tell me something more about your project *22h13 (this title is likely to be changed at any moment)*

Pierrick Sorin: *22h13 (this title is likely to be changed at any moment)* is a portrait of the artist within the atelier and it is also an update of the creative process. You see a person who creates things, doubting ... a person which shows the viewer how his ideas emerges . He reveals also his technical “tricks” and its “bricolages. What precedes material existence, visible to an art object is often more interesting than the finished product.

The finished work of art (by which I mean an object belonging to the plastic arts as well as the show and film) is always somethin static. The finished work of art moves away from

real life in which the wandering, the conflict and the failure are important. The finished object denies by its very perfection, the process that produced it. In this show I wanted to express the mental and material background of creation and show the interactions between real life and creation. A French artist named Robert Filiou once said: “Art is what makes life more interesting than art.” This phrase whose meaning is not necessarily easy to grasp, has inspired my work.

Alexandra Purcaru: Why the choice of an “unstable” title ?

Pierrick Sorin: In recent years, communication has imposed his tyranny. We create even objects of art not for their aesthetic value, but because they are “an excuse to communicate.” In this “tyranny of communication” I have been tortured, even before having written a single line of the show in order to give them a title so that the “communicators” could do their job. I leaned on the idea and I gave the illusion of being a little free, so I choose an unstable title which is also the image of time passing by which makes it all a bit fragile.



Pierrick Sorin - 22:13 - Photo by Alexandra Purcaru

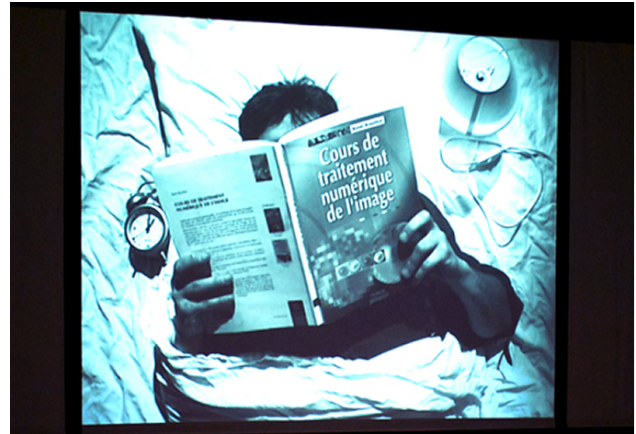
Alexandra Purcaru: Why optical theaters that were presented as your work as a plastician at CentQuatre were also presented during the show?

Pierrick Sorin: I wanted the audience to be able to see at the same time the process of creating (by which I mean the art objects about to be made in the show) and the finished objects (the exhibits). I wanted to show that the exhibition and the show dialogues a bit, or at least I wanted to give the impression that they were dialoguing.

Alexandra Purcaru: In your performance, you explore the relationship between sound (continuous ringing of a telephone and answering machine) and images (projections on three screens). What fascinates you in this blend of visual and sound communication?

Pierrick Sorin: In this show, the sound elements – those that are recurrent and punctuate the drama – are part of a rather trivial daily reality (in

particular the phone ring). They work just like the counterpoint of visual buildings within the imaginary and the poetry. All the sounds brings the artist into a reality that bores him, which seems inappropriate.



Pierrick Sorin - 22:13 - Photo by Alexandra Purcaru

Alexandra Purcaru: In *22:13* we see a multiplication of points of view: we see a live performance that is simultaneously projected on various screens. I refer to the scene where the protagonist mixes the three primary colors why did you choose to amplify the actions that otherwise are so simple?

Pierrick Sorin: I am a video maker. Although the video is not the form of art that I consider to be the richest, it has some interesting qualities that have always guided me. For example, video allows us to have a very immediate “changes of points of view”. The change of angle, the change of scale, the fragmentation of reality, can be combined to enrich the

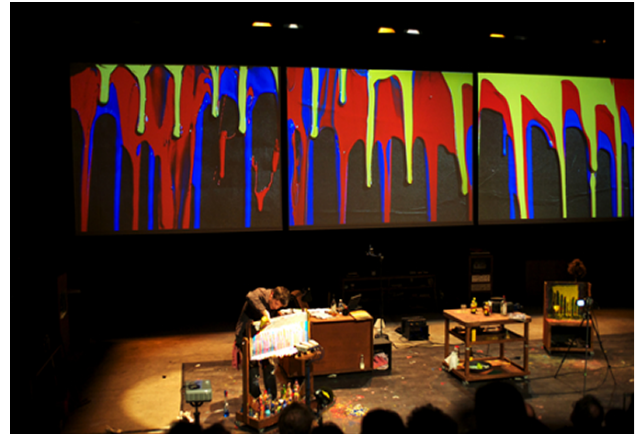
mind. They are able to open poetical spaces where all the metaphysical issues falls. Simple actions always have a metaphysical resonance. Changing the point of view is sometimes a way to hear this kind of resonance.

Alexandra Purcaru: You are an artist, a video maker, an inventor of stories of which you are often the only actor. In *22:13* we find ourselves in front of the fresco of a contemporary artist. How come we never see characters coming from outside? What is the relationship between the artist and the outside world?

Pierrick Sorin: I have a character which is quite closed. I love people in general, but I think that after all the human race is condemned to loneliness. I am also tempted by the theory of “solipsism”, from a theoretical point of view, at least. Pierre Levret, which is the main (and only) character of *22:13* lives in a relationship with “the other” in an imaginary way (for this reason he dresses up and puts wigs).

Even his psychoanalyst is an avatar of himself. That said, if I was not an only child I might have had a very different view of things. I am not competent to speak in general terms the artist’s relationship with the world. I just feel that the artist is often mentally retarded. Or, more soberly, an artist is

someone who finds it difficult to adjust to the outside world because of various difficulties and permanent conflicts.



Pierrick Sorin - 22:13 - Photo by Alexandra Purcaru

Alexandra Purcaru: Your way of telling the artist days reminds me of Mrs. Dalloway’s days: you multiply the events like in a intimate visual and sound diary which is both told and staged. How did you handle the pace of the diary and the hectic pace of life of the artist.

Pierrick Sorin: In real life I rock like many people – but more than others, even. I oscillate between inner thoughts a little ‘soft’ and moments of hyperactivity. I built this show on this duality, simply following my spontaneous inclination. I carefully made some breaks in the rhythm, in order to keep up viewers’ attention. *22:13* is a very sincere and spontaneous work, but it is still a show: there are some constructions and stylistic effects which are designed to make things acceptable,

even “pleasant.” Despite what we may be closed, we all love to be loved by others.

<http://www.pierricksorin.com/>

Link index

Peter Tscherkassky.audiovisuals From A Darkroom

<http://www.diagonale.at/>

http://www.digicult.it/wp-content/uploads/2009/12/numero63_Peter-Tscherkassky-02.png

http://www.digicult.it/wp-content/uploads/2009/12/numero63_Peter-Tscherkassky-03.png

http://www.digicult.it/wp-content/uploads/2009/12/numero63_Peter-Tscherkassky-04.png

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http://www.digicult.it/wp-content/uploads/2009/12/numero63_Peter-Tscherkassky-08.png

Paper Resistance: Graphic (r)existence

http://www.digicult.it/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/numero63_-Paper-resistance-02.png

http://www.digicult.it/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/numero63_-Paper-resistance-03.png

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